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Imitation





for Sarah



ON THE

Imitation of Christ.



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Cambridge:
*Printed by C. J. Clay, M.A.
at the University Press.*

Thomas à Kempis &c.
ON THE

Imitation of Christ.

FOUR BOOKS.

A NEW TRANSLATION.

BY

HARVEY GOODWIN, D.D.

DEAN OF ELY.

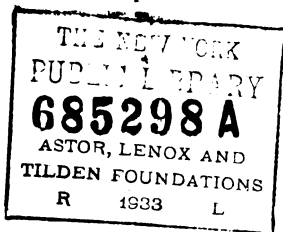


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1869.

E.F.



ROY W. H. H.
OLSEN
HAROLD



PREFACE.

IT may be well to say a few words by way of preface to this translation of the well-known treatise *De Imitatione Christi*, commonly, though not with certainty, ascribed to *Thomas à Kempis*.

The work, it need hardly be said, has been frequently translated; not only into English, but into almost all other European languages. In fact there is no book which has been translated so frequently. The present translation was undertaken without intention of publication, as a labour of love, and because the translator did not feel satisfied with those in circulation. When completed, however, he determined to publish it, having first compared it with several other versions in order to correct and improve it. It was published in 1860.

The only point which requires special explanation is the following. In one respect a liberty has been taken with the original; or rather the language has been adapted, and not translated. Certain small portions of the treatise seem unsuitable for ordinary English readers, partly because of their monastic dress, partly because they involve doctrine not accepted by the Church of England: the question arises, what is to be done with such passages?

It seemed to the translator that such portions might be paraphrased in such a manner as to preserve their spirit, and yet to avoid all that could be regarded as unsuitable. This course has been attempted; at the same time the changes which have been made have been carefully noted, so that nothing may be attributed to the author, which he did not write; and the reader will accordingly find all interpolations or substitutions marked with an asterisk. To take an example: the heading of Book I. Chap. xvii. is in the original, *De Monasticâ Vîtâ*: in this edition has been substituted the title, *On a life of Piety*. Of course such changes require much judgment. The manner in which the present translation has been received leads the translator to hope that his task has not been rashly executed: at all events the reader will always know when he is perusing words for which the translator, and not the author, is responsible.

H. G.

THE DEANERY, ELY.

Easter, 1869.



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BOOK I.

HINTS CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

CHAP. I. *ON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, AND CONTEMPT OF ALL THE VANITIES OF THE WORLD.*

 *E that followeth Me*, saith the Lord, *shall not walk in darkness*¹. These are the words of Christ; and they teach us how necessary it is that we should imitate His life and conduct, if we wish to be truly enlightened, and set free from all blindness of heart. What higher employment can we have therefore, than to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ?

2. The teaching of Christ is beyond all human teaching; and he who has the Spirit will find therein *the hidden Manna*². Yet many hear the Gospel continually and are little moved by it, because they have not the Spirit of Christ. He who would thoroughly understand Christ's word must endeavour to copy the example of Christ's life.

3. What profit is there in disputing subtilly concerning the Trinity, if you lack humility, without which you cannot please the Trinity? In truth, subtle words do not make a man holy and just, but a life of piety makes him dear to God. I would rather feel contrition, than be able to define it. If you know the

¹ *S. John viii. 12.*

² *Rev. ii. 17.*

whole Bible by heart, and have all human learning besides, what is the profit of the whole without the love and favour of God? *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*¹, except to love God and serve Him alone. The highest wisdom is to despise the world and to seek the kingdom of heaven.

4. It is vanity to seek perishing riches, and to set our hopes upon them. It is vanity to pursue honour, and to seek to become great. It is vanity to give way to the lusts of the flesh, and to love those things which must bring misery upon us. It is vanity to wish that our lives may be long, and to be careless whether they be good. It is vanity to think wholly concerning the present life, and not make provision for the life to come. It is vanity to love the things which quickly pass away, and not set our hearts upon joys which are at God's right hand for evermore.

5. Never forget that saying of the Preacher, *The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*². Study to draw away your heart from the love of things seen and temporal, and to fix it upon things unseen and eternal. For they who are satisfied with the pleasures of sense defile their own consciences, and lose the favour of God.

CHAP. II. ON HUMILITY.

1. ALL men are naturally desirous of knowledge; but what is the value of knowledge without the fear of God? In truth the rudest peasant who serves God is more to be envied than the proudest philosopher, who considers the courses of the stars, but neglects Him. He who knows himself thoroughly, is vile in his own eyes, and thinks little of human praise. What shall it profit me in the sight of God, who judges according to works, if I should know all that can be known in this world, and have no charity.

¹ Eccles. i. 2.

² Eccles. i. 8.

2. Beware then of a too great hankering after knowledge, for the pursuit of it is distracting and delusive. They who have much knowledge are tempted to display it, and to delight in being spoken of as superior men. Yet there are many things, which it profits the soul little or nothing to know; and he is anything but a wise man, who gives more attention to these than to the things which are to his eternal profit. Many words do not satisfy the soul, but a holy life refreshes the mind, and a pure conscience gives confidence before God.

3. The greater and better your knowledge, the heavier will be your judgment; unless you also live a more holy life. Do not allow yourself therefore to be puffed up by any art or science, but rather tremble at the thought of your responsibility. If you fancy that you know much, bear in mind that there is much more which you do not know. *Be not high-minded, but fear*¹. Why should you desire to be preferred to others, when there are so many superior to yourself? If you would learn anything and know anything to good purpose, allow yourself without murmuring to be neglected and to be held in small repute.

4. The highest and most useful lesson, that a man can learn, is to know himself thoroughly, and to hold a low opinion of himself. The perfection of wisdom is to think little of ourselves and highly of others. Even if we see our neighbour manifestly committing sin, we should shrink from feeling confident that we are better than he, because we know not that under like temptation we ourselves should have been steadfast. We are all weak and erring; and we do well not to assume that any one of our brethren is weaker and more erring than ourselves.

CHAP. III. ON TRUE KNOWLEDGE.

1. BLESSED is the man, whom the Truth itself teaches, not by words and figures, but by an immediate

¹ Rom. xi. 20.

to repeat what we hear, even if we do believe it. Take counsel with a wise and right-judging man; and seek the instruction of your betters, rather than follow your own devices. A holy life makes a man wise in matters divine, and strengthens his judgment. The more humble a man is and the more submissive to the will of God, so much the greater will be his wisdom and the steadiness of his mind.

CHAP. V. *ON THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.*

1. TRUTH rather than fine writing is to be looked for in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible must be read in the spirit in which it was composed. We must expect to find in it what is profitable, rather than what is subtle. The simple and devotional books must be studied, no less than the deep and difficult. And do not think too much of the style of the several writers, but let the love of truth induce you to read them. Do not ask who speaks this or that, but attend to what is spoken.

2. *The world passeth away, but the truth of the Lord endureth for ever*¹. God speaks to us in divers manners without respect of persons. We are often hindered in our reading of the Scriptures, because we wish curiously to discuss and explain, when we had much better simply pass on. If you really desire to profit, read with humility, simplicity, and faith, and do not be ambitious to gain a reputation for superior knowledge. Do not despise the helps to understanding the Scriptures, which God may place in your way: the thoughts of holy men, who have studied the Scriptures before you, are to be regarded with thankfulness and with respect.

CHAP. VI. *ON INORDINATE AFFECTIONS.*

1. A MAN can never be at peace, whose affections are inordinately set upon any earthly object. The am-

¹ 1 S. Joh. ii. 17. Psalm cxvii. 2.

bitious and avaricious can never rest; the humble and poor in spirit are refreshed with the multitude of peace. The man who is not dead to self is easily tempted and overcome even in small things. He who is infirm of purpose, and still in a certain sense carnal and sensual, can with difficulty raise his mind above earthly desires; and therefore the loss of earthly things costs him much sorrow, and opposition to his will makes him angry.

2. And again, if he obtains what he desires, immediately his conscience smites him, because he perceives that he has only gratified a passion and not found peace. True peace is to be found in resisting the passions, not in gratifying them. Peace will therefore exist not in the heart of the carnal and sensual, but in that of the spiritual and holy.

CHAP. VII. *ON THE FOLLY OF INDULGING VAIN HOPES AND PROUD THOUGHTS.*

1. HE is but a fool who puts his trust in men or in any created thing. Do not be ashamed of ministering to others for the love of Jesus Christ, or of being poor in the things of this world. Do not build your hopes upon yourself, but upon God. Do what you can, and God will prosper your good will. Do not trust in your own knowledge and talents, or in those of any man, but rather in the grace of God, who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

2. Do not glory in riches, if you have them, nor in friends because they are powerful, but in God who giveth all things, and who is willing to give even Himself to those who love Him. Do not boast of your bodily strength or beauty, which a slight sickness may destroy. Do not be vain of your natural gifts, lest you displease God, from whom such gifts come, and to whom they in truth belong.

3. Do not think yourself better than others, for in

the sight of God, who knows what is in man, you may perchance appear worse than they. Do not be proud of your good works, for God sees as man seeth not, and things which are pleasing to men are sometimes displeasing to Him. If you perceive in yourself anything that is good, keep yourself humble by considering that there may be in others what is better. If you esteem all others better than yourself, no harm is done; but much harm may be done, by assuming yourself to be better than any one single person. Abundance of peace is with the humble, but dissatisfaction and jealousy are in the heart of the proud.

CHAP. VIII. *ON THE DANGER OF TOO GREAT FAMILIARITY.*

1. *'OPEN not thine heart to every man'*¹, but take counsel with the wise and with those who fear God. Be cautious with the young and with strangers. Do not fawn upon the rich, nor seek the society of the great. Associate with the humble and simple-minded, with the holy and amiable, and let your intercourse tend to mutual improvement. Be pure, reserved, and modest. Seek the society of God and His holy angels, and court not the notice of men.

2. Charity is due to all, but not familiarity. Sometimes a man who is personally unknown obtains a good report, and is only injured in general estimation by being known. Sometimes we think to please others by taking them into our acquaintance, and we do in fact displease them by letting them see defects in our character which they did not perceive before.

CHAP. IX. *ON SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE.*

1.* *SUBMIT yourselves one to another in the fear of God*, says the Apostle. It is much safer to be in a po-

¹ Ecclus. viii. 19.

sition of subjection, than in a position to command. Many submit themselves more from necessity than for conscience' sake, and so lose the blessing of obedience. Those who keep God's commandments walk at liberty. Go where you will, you will find no rest except in humble submission to those whom God has placed over you.

2. We are all disposed to fancy our own opinions best, and to esteem those most highly who think with us; but in some matters it is necessary to give up our own views for the sake of peace. Who is so wise as to have an infallible understanding of all things? Who therefore is entitled to trust entirely in his own views and to despise those of others? If you sacrifice your opinions, without doing violence to your conscience, you will reap benefit in the end.

3. I have often heard it said, that it is safer to hear and receive advice, than to give it. Nevertheless every one must in a variety of matters think for himself; but to refuse to give way to others, when reason and right require it, is a mark of pride and obstinacy.

CHAP. X. *ON THE BRIDLING OF THE TONGUE.*

1. BEWARE of too much intercourse with society; for the things of this world, though in themselves innocent, may easily gain so much of your thoughts as to be a serious impediment in your way. We are soon led captive by vanity. How often do we wish that we had been silent, or that we had been more circumspect in company! But why is it that we allow ourselves to talk so freely, when our conscience tells us how much we suffer by it?

2. Alas we often talk to very little good purpose! And we have need to watch and pray lest our time *should be spent in mere idleness.* If talk we must, let

us talk of things which tend in some way to edification. He cannot be advancing much in true religion, who is not careful concerning the bridling of his tongue. Yet the tongue may be used to profit, and no small advantage is to be derived from conversation upon spiritual things amongst those who are one in heart and mind.

CHAP. XI. *ON PEACE OF MIND AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.*

1. WE often deprive ourselves of peace of mind, by occupying ourselves with the sayings and doings of others, which do not concern us. How can a man long remain in peace who frets himself about other men's matters, who occupies himself for ever with things without and seldom looks within! Blessed are the simple-minded, for they will have much peace.

2. How is it that eminent Saints of God have attained to that degree of perfection which we admire in them? By mortifying themselves from earthly desires, and fixing their whole affections upon God. We for the most part are too much taken up with our own fancies and with things transitory. We seldom subdue entirely a single fault, and we do not earnestly aim at daily progress: and so we remain lukewarm or cold.

3. If we were quite dead to the world, we should be able to understand divine things, and to enjoy heavenly thoughts. Our chief hindrance in spiritual progress is our bondage to lusts and passions; we cannot make up our minds to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, *and* therefore we cannot follow in the steps of Saints. When trouble comes upon us, however slight, we are apt to be cast down and to fly to human consolations.

4. If we fought the battle against sin the world and the devil like men, we should be sensible of the hand of the Lord helping us from Heaven. He, who has *placed us in a position in which warfare is necessary*, is

ready to help those who fight in dependence upon His grace, and to give them the victory. If we consider religion to consist only in outward observances, our devotion will come to an end. The axe must be laid to the root of the tree, in order that being purged from passions we may serve God with a quiet mind.

5. If we could get rid of one fault or one bad habit every year, we should rapidly go on towards perfection. But we often find on the contrary, that we were holier and better in the early part of our spiritual life, than we have been since. Christian zeal, and Christian graces, ought to grow from day to day; but it is sometimes thought a great matter, if the warmth of first love has not wholly died out. If we would but consent to put a slight restraint upon ourselves at the first, we should be able to go through everything afterwards with joyfulness and a light heart.

6. It is a difficult thing to break through habit; it is more difficult still to act directly contrary to strong inclination. But if we do not conquer ourselves in small things, how shall we in the greater? Resist inclination in its beginnings, and unlearn bad habits, lest you find yourself led from bad to worse. O if you only knew what peace to yourself and what joy to others would result from your pious behaviour, I think you would be more in earnest about your spiritual improvement.

CHAP. XII. *ON THE BENEFITS OF ADVERSITY.*

1. IT is good for us sometimes to be in trouble and to be crossed in our wishes, for such things bring us to our senses, and remind us that here we are strangers and pilgrims, and that we must not place all our hopes upon this present world. It is good for us sometimes to meet with opposition and reproach, and to be evil spoken of and misrepresented when we do not deserve it. These things tend to destroy vain glory and to keep us humble.

For when we are little esteemed of men, we are made more earnest in our desire of obtaining the approval of God and of our own consciences.

2. A man ought so thoroughly to rest upon God, that he shall have no need of many human consolations. When a holy man is in trouble or temptation, or oppressed by evil thoughts, then he understands more than ever the need of the presence of God, without whom he can do no good thing. Then he becomes full of sadness, and prays for relief from his miseries. Then he clings to life no longer, and desires to *depart and to be with Christ*¹. Then also he perceives that entire safety and perfect peace cannot be his portion in this world.

CHAP. XIII. ON RESISTING TEMPTATION.

1. As long as we live in this world, we must meet with trial and temptation. Therefore it becomes us to guard against temptation, and to be watchful in prayer, lest Satan gain an advantage over us; for he never sleeps, but *goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*². No one is so perfect and so holy as not to be liable to temptations; do what we will, we cannot be entirely free from them.

2. But though temptations are grievous and hard to bear, they are often of great use to a man, because they humble and purify and teach him. All the Saints of God have passed through many tribulations and temptations, and have profited by them. They who cannot resist temptations fall away and become reprobate. There is no position in society so sacred, and no place so secret, as to be free from temptations and from troubles.

3. A man cannot be entirely free from temptation as long as he lives, because being born in sin he carries the occasion of temptation within him. When one temptation or tribulation is gone another comes, and we shall

¹ Phil. i. 23.

² 1 Pet. v. 8.

always have something to endure: for perfect happiness is gone for ever. Many seek to be free from temptations, and fall into them all the more. Flight alone will not give us the victory, but by patience and true humility we are made stronger than our enemies.

4. He who only resists temptation in its outward form, and does not tear it up by the roots, is little the better: temptation will soon return upon him, and rage worse than ever. By patience and perseverance, with God's grace, you will effect more, than by more violent means. Be thankful for any advice which may enable you to resist temptation, and do not be severe with those who are tempted; but rather give them comfort, as you would desire that others should do to you.

5. The source of all temptation to evil is unsteadiness of mind and want of faith in God: as a ship without a helm is tossed about by the waves, so is a man without fixed principles by temptations. Fire tries iron, and temptation tries principle. Frequently we do not know ourselves and our powers, but temptation teaches us of what we are made. It is best to watch against the very beginnings of temptation, because the foe can be most easily subdued when he is not suffered to enter the mind, but is met outside as soon as ever he has knocked at the door. It has been well said;

Check the first symptoms: if too long you wait,
Disease will grow, and medicine come too late.

For at first a simple thought of evil occurs to the mind, then a strong imagination, then a pleasure in the thought and impure emotion, and lastly, assent; and thus by degrees the enemy gains an entire victory, because he was not opposed in the first instance. And the longer a man delays resistance, so much the more incapable of resistance does he daily become, and the enemy gains daily so much the more power over him.

6. Some persons suffer more from temptation in the *beginning of their spiritual life*, some more towards the

end. Some are (as it were) invalids through the whole of their course. Some according to the wisdom of God suffer little; for God knows what is best for each, and considers their condition and apportions their lot accordingly.

7. Therefore we must not despair under temptation, but pray so much the more fervently for help in our tribulation to Him, who, as S. Paul says, *will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it*¹. Let us therefore in all temptation and tribulation humble our souls under the hand of God, for He will save and exalt those who are of a humble spirit.

8. In temptations and tribulations is shewn the real progress that a man has made; and the character is brought out, and Christian virtues can be exercised. It is easy for a man to be zealous and earnest, when there is nothing to try him; but if he conducts himself well and patiently in time of adversity, then it may be hoped that he is really advancing in the Christian life. Some persons are kept from great temptations, and are daily overcome by evil in trifles, in order that from the experience of their weakness in small things they may learn humility, and not be over confident in greater matters.

CHAP. XIV. ON AVOIDING RASH JUDGMENT.

1. JUDGE yourself, and take care not to judge others. When a man judges others he wastes his time, often makes mistakes, and easily falls into sin; but in judging himself he always spends his labour to good purpose. Our judgment is often warped by our fancies; and we easily sacrifice a sound opinion to prejudice. If God were really the end of all our thoughts, we should not so easily be led astray.

2. But often there is some secret thought within, or some outward circumstance, which influences us quite as

¹ 1 Cor. x. 13.

much as the love of God. Many do in reality follow selfish ends in their conduct, and yet are not aware of it. They are satisfied when everything goes according to their own views and wishes; but if these are thwarted, immediately they are dissatisfied and displeased. Difference of opinion often gives rise to disputes amongst friends and neighbours, even amongst those who really fear God.

3. Old habits are not easily broken, and men are generally obstinate in their own views. If you rest more upon your own reason and skill than upon the power of Jesus Christ, you will lose the light which otherwise you might enjoy: God desires that in all things we should be in submission to Him, and that a burning love should guide us where reason would leave us in the dark.

CHAP. XV. ON WORKS OF CHARITY.

1. NOTHING upon earth ought to persuade us to do that which in itself is wrong: but ordinary duties may sometimes rightly be postponed to works of mercy, for this is in fact to leave one good work undone in order to perform a better. Works without charity profit nothing; but those which really do proceed from charity, although they may seem small and trifling, are in the sight of God of great price; for God considers rather what a man is able to do, than the greatness of what he does.

2. He does much, who loves much. He does much, who does well. He does well, who seeks the good of others rather than his own. That which seems to be charity is frequently mere worldliness, because it is the result only of natural inclination, selfwill, the hope of reward, or the desire of gaining our own ends.

3. He whose charity is genuine, or who is perfect in love, seeks himself in nothing, but the glory of God in all things. He envies none because he is satisfied with what is allotted to himself; nor does he desire selfish gratification, but rather to be blest with the vision of God. *Whatever is good either in himself or in others he refers*

wholly to God, from whom as a fountain all good things proceed, and in whom the Saints eternally rest. O how full of vanity do all earthly things appear to him, who has within him a spark of heavenly love!

CHAP. XVI. *ON BEARING WITH THE
FAULTS OF OTHERS.*

1. **WHATEVER** a man finds either in himself or in others, which cannot be altered, must be borne patiently, until God ordains otherwise. This is a good discipline, and helps forward the graces of the Christian character. In such cases let it be our humble prayer, that God will succour us and enable us to bear what He lays upon us.

2. If a person resists one or two admonitions, do not argue with him, but commit the matter to God, with the prayer that His will may be done and His honour advanced by the conduct of all His servants, seeing that He knows how to bring good out of evil. Learn to be patient in bearing the faults and infirmities of others, remembering that there are many things in yourself, which others have to bear. If you cannot make yourself what you would wish to be, how can you expect to be able to make others exactly after your mind? We contemplate excellence in others with satisfaction, and yet we are slow to remedy our own faults.

3. We desire that others should be strict in their conduct, yet we shrink from strictness ourselves. We do not make the same allowance for our brethren, which we very readily make in our own case. In fact we weigh ourselves in one balance, and our neighbours in another. If all were perfect, how would God exercise our patience?

4. But now hath God ordained that *we should bear one another's burdens*¹, because no one is faultless, no one without his own burden, no one sufficient in himself, no one wise enough in himself; so that it becomes a duty to support each other, to comfort each other, to assist each other, to instruct and admonish each other. The stronger

¹ Gal. vi. 2.

a man's Christian principle, the more clearly will it manifest itself in time of adversity; for adversity does not make a man weak, but only tries him and shews what his character really is.

CHAP. XVII. * *ON A LIFE OF PIETY.*

1.* IT is necessary to learn to deny and restrain yourself in many things, if you wish to live a life of holiness. It is no easy thing to live in society and preserve a consistent Christian character. Blessed is he who has lived in the fear of God, and done the work in the world which Christ sent him to do. If you wish to profit both yourself and others, regard yourself as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth. It is necessary sometimes to become a fool for Christ's sake, in order that you may be a dispenser of true wisdom.

2.* Professions and phrases will do you little good; it is a change of life and thorough curbing of the passions which constitute true piety. He who does not really desire to know God and to advance in holiness, will find in a life of piety nothing but dulness and weariness. And a man's example will be of little profit to his brethren, unless his heart be really humble and he be content to occupy a lowly place among them.

3.* You came into the world to serve your brethren, not to lord it over them; you are called to work and to suffer, not to gossip and take your ease. This world is a furnace in which men are tried like gold. No man can stand before God, unless he has determined to humble himself in His sight with all his heart and soul.

CHAP. XVIII. *ON THE EXAMPLES OF HOLY MEN.*

1. LOOK at the examples of Holy Men who have gone before you, and who have truly advanced the doctrine of God *their Saviour* in all things, and have been

lights in the world, and then you will see how poor and mean your doings are. What are our sacrifices compared with those of the saints and friends of Christ, who have been called to serve the Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and fatigue, in watchings and fastings, in persecution and reproach?

2.* O how many and great tribulations have been undergone by Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ! men and women who have hated their lives in this world, that they might possess them in the world to come. What self-sacrifice has been exhibited by those who in early times fought the good fight of faith against cruel persecutions, and by those noble soldiers of Christ who have in other ages given up all, in order that they might preach Him and His Gospel!

3. Such men knew better than to waste their time; every hour belonged to God and seemed to pass quickly if spent in His service; to labour in the cause of Christ was more to them than daily food. Riches, dignities, honours, friends, relations, all were given up for Christ; nothing in this world was dear to them; daily bread sufficed them. Therefore being poor in this world they became infinitely rich towards God. Outwardly they might seem to be in want, but within they had abundance of grace and fulness of divine consolation.

4. These men were strangers to the world, but friends and very near to God. In themselves they seemed as nothing, and contemptible in the world's eyes; but in the eyes of God they were precious and beloved. They were steadfast in humility, they lived in obedience, they abounded in love and patience; and therefore they daily advanced in holiness, and increased in favour with God. They are examples to all times, and their influence ought to be more powerful to draw us onwards, than that of the multitude of the lukewarm and careless to keep us *back in the service of God.*

5.* O what a zeal was that which warmed the hearts of Christians in early days, when men thought it nothing to give up all their goods and become poor for Christ's sake! When persecution stared in the face, and friends frowned, and the cross was a mark of ignominy and extreme shame, how mightily then the word of God grew and prevailed! how thorough was the change produced by putting on Christ! Now we are too apt to be satisfied with mere respectability, and decent attendance at church, and abstinence from scandalous sins!

6.* Things certainly are not as they should be. Men are afraid of being righteous overmuch, and so their righteousness becomes over little. They deride those who have gone into deserts and monasteries for the sake of gaining heaven, while they forget that zeal, even if it be mistaken, is better than no zeal at all, and that to endeavour to be free from the world, even by running away from it, is better than giving way to it without any resistance whatever. There have been men who have manfully fought against the world and given themselves up a living sacrifice to God; these are your examples; follow them, even as they followed Christ!

CHAP. XIX. *ON RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

1. THE life of an earnest Christian ought to abound in all virtues, and should be in its inner reality that which it seems externally to men to be. In fact it should be better within than without, for God sees our hearts; and it becomes us to live in His fear continually, and to be pure as angels, because we are ever in His presence. Every day we should renew our vows, and endeavour to stir our minds up to the same degree of fervour which warmed them when we first earnestly set ourselves to follow Christ; we should say, "Help me, O Lord God, to fulfil my vows and give myself to Thy service, and grant me to walk henceforth more consistently and earnestly in Thy holy ways."

2. Our spiritual progress depends very much upon our own zeal, and great efforts can alone effect great deeds. If he who makes steadfast resolutions often fails, what is to be expected from him who troubles himself with no resolutions at all? There are many ways in which we may be beguiled out of good purposes, and an omission of religious duties can hardly take place without spiritual loss. We must trust for the steadiness of our purposes rather to the grace of God, than to our own wisdom; in Him we may ever put our trust. Man proposes, but God disposes; and *the way of a man is not in himself*¹.

3. If religious exercises are interfered with by necessary duties or calls of charity, we may believe that the soul will not suffer. But if we become weary in the work and careless concerning communion with God, we cannot be free either from blame or from spiritual loss. Strive as we may, we shall probably find ourselves falling short in many things. Yet we should do well always to keep before our minds some one distinct purpose, the acquiring of some good habit, the breaking through some bad one, and, above all things, to contend against those hindrances which we find chiefly to stand in our way. Our actions and our thoughts are alike to be examined and regulated, for both the one and the other are connected with our spiritual progress.

4. If you cannot continually commune with your heart, yet do not omit to do so at least twice in every day, that is, every morning and every evening. In the morning make good resolutions, in the evening see how you have kept them; in the morning think what you ought to be, in the evening consider what you have actually been in thought, word, and deed, and whether in any one of these you have sinned either against God or against your neighbour. Gird yourself like a man against the assaults of the devil; bridle your appetite, and you will the more easily guard against fleshly lusts. Never be

¹ Jer. x. 23.

idle, but if not otherwise employed read or write or pray or meditate or do something which may profit either yourself or your neighbour. Do not neglect bodily exercise; it is good for the health of both body and soul.

5.* Seek occasional retirement, but do not let the notion of the benefit of retirement render you indifferent to the active business of life. Perform those duties which your station in life imposes upon you, and when they have been well done seek time for retirement and devotion. The same religious exercises do not suit all persons; and even the same person may employ himself differently at different seasons; Christmas and Lent, Feasts and Fasts, have their appropriate tone of mind. One kind of exercise is best in seasons of temptation, another in seasons of peace and quiet. When we are sad we can dwell upon some subjects, when we are joyful in the Lord we can more easily dwell upon others.

6. The Feasts of the Church should be used for the purpose of holy exercises. These solemn days are monitors of the fleeting character of this world, and of the eternal Feast to which we all hope to come. At such times therefore we may well solemnize our minds more than usual, and give them up more completely to religious exercise, and meditate more than usual upon the near approach of the time when God will call us to Himself.

7. And if that time seem to be deferred, let us believe that it is in mercy, because God sees that we are not yet ready and still unworthy of *the glory which shall be revealed in us*¹; and let this belief urge us to increased diligence. *Blessed is that servant*, says Christ, *whom his Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He hath*².

¹ Rom. viii. 18.

² S. Luke xii. 43, 44.

CHAP. XX. *ON A TASTE FOR SOLITUDE
AND SILENCE.*

1. STUDY to find times of leisure, and meditate frequently concerning the goodness of God. Do not trouble yourself with curious questions. Let your reading be such as to excite compunction, rather than merely pass the time. If you avoid all useless gossiping, and idle talk, you will be able to find abundant time for good meditations. Holy men have ever been frugal of the time given to human friends, and have lived to God in secret.

2. Some one has said: "As often as I have been in company, I have returned a less man than I went." We often find this when we allow ourselves to mix freely in society, and give our tongues the rein. It is much easier to be silent altogether, than to use moderation in speech. It is easier to protect oneself at home, than to walk about and be always on the guard. He therefore, who desires to advance in the inner and spiritual life, ought to retire with Jesus from the multitude. No one is safe in public, who is not happy in retirement. No one is safe in speech, who is not happy in silence. No one is safe as a master, who is not happy in serving. No one is safe as a teacher, who is not happy as a learner.

3. No one may safely rejoice, except those who have the testimony of a good conscience; and holy men are then most in safety when they are most full of the fear of God. Nor are they the less careful or the less humble, because they have become conspicuous for holiness and Christian virtues. On the other hand bad men deem themselves safe in consequence of mere pride and presumption, and in the end they find that they have deceived themselves. However highly favoured you may be by God, never fancy yourself safe in this world, but

be content to wait for security from all evil until you see God as He is.

4. Those who are highly thought of amongst men are liable to danger from self-confidence. And on this account it is better for many that they should not be entirely free from temptations, but should be often attacked, so that they may be prevented from indulging in a sense of security, being puffed up with pride, and leaning too much upon outward comforts. O if a man could only give up the pursuit of transitory joys, and wean his heart from the present world, what a good conscience might he have! O if a man could only give up all vain cares, and occupy himself with divine things, and place his whole hope in God, what rest and peace might he possess!

5. No one is worthy of divine consolation, who has not felt genuine sorrow for sin. If you wish to think upon your faults and to grieve over them, go into your chamber, and shut out the noise of the world, as it is written; *Commune with your own heart and in your chamber, and be still*¹. You will find in the retirement of your own closet, what you will miss out of doors. Retirement is sweet to those who accustom themselves to it, to others it is wearisome. If you begin early to cultivate habits of retirement, you will find that it will gradually become pleasant and a source of spiritual comfort.

6.* In silence and quiet the soul grows in holiness, and learns to understand the hidden things of Scripture. There it finds streams of tears with which to grieve over those sins which separate it from its Maker. He who withdraws himself from friends will sometimes be blest with the society of God and of holy angels. A holy man must learn to use even the society of friends, like other good gifts of God, without abusing it.

7.* Why hanker after forbidden things? *The world passeth away, and the lust thereof*². There may be

¹ Ps. iv. 4.

² 1 S. John ii. 17.

temptations to unlimited enjoyment of the pleasures of society; but what does dissipation leave behind it except a wounded conscience and a heavy heart? A merry beginning of pleasure often makes a heavy end, and late hours often make sad mornings. All worldly pleasure is sweet to the mouth at first, but is often bitter to the stomach afterwards. God gives you all things to enjoy; beware of so enjoying them as to turn His blessings into a curse.

8.* What can you desire that is likely to continue long? You think that if you had this or that you would be satisfied, but you would be disappointed even if you obtained your desires. What are all existing things but vanity? Raise your eyes to God above, and ask of Him pardon for your sins and negligences. Banish vain thoughts, and fix your mind upon those things which God has commanded. Enter into your closet and shut to the door, and ask Jesus to be your companion. Keep Him ever with you, for in no other way will you find such peace.

CHAP. XXI. ON GODLY SORROW.

1. IF you desire to advance in holiness, keep yourself in the fear of God, and do not allow yourself too much liberty, but keep all your senses under discipline, and do not give yourself up to foolish joy. Give yourself up to godly sorrow, and so you will find the way of true devotion. Godly sorrow brings many advantages, of which worldly joy is likely to deprive you. It is indeed wonderful, that a man can ever give himself up to unbounded joy in this life, when he considers and reflects upon his distance from his true home and the manifold dangers which lie between it and him.

2. Owing to levity and want of diligence in examining our own defects we are not sensible of our spiritual maladies, and we often laugh when we ought *rather to weep*. There is no true liberty or wholesome

joy, except in the fear of the Lord and in the light of a good conscience. Happy is he who is able to get rid of all distraction, and bring himself to the experience of godly sorrow. Happy is he who abjures everything which can soil his conscience or weigh upon it. Fight like a man: habit is subdued by habit. If you have courage to set at nought the maxims of the world, the world will be willing enough to let you go your own way.

3. Do not concern yourself with other people's matters. Always keep your eye upon yourself first, and give advice to yourself rather than to the dearest of your friends. If you do not enjoy the favour of men do not trouble yourself about it; grieve rather if you have conducted yourself in such a manner as to lose the favour of God. It is always better and safer for a man not to have many comforts in this life, especially those which concern the body. But if we have not divine comforts, or have them seldom, we are ourselves to blame, because we do not sorrow after a godly sort and do not thoroughly cast away from us all that is worldly and vain.

4. Always bear in mind that you are unworthy of divine comfort, and worthy rather of much tribulation. When a man's heart is truly contrite, then the whole world presents him with thoughts of sadness and bitterness. A good man finds abundant cause for sorrow and weeping; whether he reflects upon his own condition or that of his neighbour, he knows that no one can live here free from trouble; and the more carefully he looks upon himself, the more cause of grief he finds. What occasion for honest grief and inward contrition can we have more pressing than our sins and vices, in which we are so entangled, that we rarely find strength to contemplate heavenly things?

5. If you thought more frequently of death than of length of life, there would be little doubt of your exerting

yourself diligently to improve. Or if you seriously considered the future pains of Hell, I cannot but believe that you would willingly submit to any privation and would not shrink from any discipline. But because the thought of these things does not go below the surface of our hearts, and we still love the pleasures of this present world, therefore we remain cold and indifferent.

6. You have need of a spirit within, which only God can give you: pray therefore humbly to the Lord, that He would give you the spirit of contrition and godly sorrow, and say, *Feed me, Lord, with the bread of tears, and give me plenteousness of tears to drink*¹.

CHAP. XXII. ON THE CONTEMPLATION OF HUMAN MISERY.

1. YOU are miserable, wherever you may be and whithersoever you turn, unless you turn to God. Why are you disturbed because things do not go with you altogether as you wish? Who is there that has everything to his mind? Neither you, nor I, nor any man upon the face of the earth. No one in this world is free from trouble and anxiety. Who has the happiest lot? Surely he who is called upon to suffer for God's sake.

2. Many people are weak enough to say: "See, what a prosperous life that man is leading! how rich he is, or how great, or how distinguished and powerful!" But if you set your mind upon heavenly things you will see that all those temporal advantages are of no account, but extremely uncertain, and oppressive rather than otherwise, because they are never possessed without anxiety and fear. The happiness of man does not consist in possessing temporal things in abundance, but in being satisfied with having enough. Our life upon earth, if rightly considered, can never be free from sorrow. The more spiritual a man becomes, so much the more does

¹ Ps. lxxx. 5.

he feel the bitterness of the present life, because he feels the more acutely the intensity of human corruption. And the more a man tries to do the will of God, so much the more does he perceive his own weakness and short coming.

3. For in truth the necessities of the body are often made to injure the health of the soul. Woe to those who do not know their danger and misery! and still more, woe to those who love this world and its pleasures! Yet we see that many do so love it, (although they have scarcely the means of subsistence,) that if they could only live in it for ever, they would never trouble themselves about the world to come.

4. Alas! what madness it is to be thus buried in the things of this world, and to have no taste for any but carnal delights! And the misery of the case is, that they who do thus will find out one day how vile and worthless were the things which they loved. The saints of God, and the devoted friends of Christ, have never been those who have considered what would be pleasing to flesh and blood, or loved those things which flourish in this present world, but those whose whole hope and aspiration have been directed to things eternal. Their whole heart has been lifted above to joys which will last for ever, and so they have been preserved from the danger of laying up their treasure upon earth.

5. My brother, let nothing stand in the way of your spiritual improvement. You have still time and opportunity. Why should you put off till to-morrow? Bestir yourself at once, and say, "Now is the time to be up and doing; now is the time for fighting against sin, the world, and the Devil; now is the time for repentance and amendment." The hour of sickness and trouble is the hour of rest, not of work. You must *go through fire and water*, before God *brings you out into a wealthy place*¹. Unless you exert yourself, you will never over-

¹ Ps. lxvi. 12.

come evil. As long as we carry about with us our frail bodies, we cannot be free from sin, and we cannot live without pain and trouble. We would willingly have rest from our misery; but because through sin we have lost innocency, we have also lost true blessedness. Therefore we must be patient, and wait for God's mercy, *until this tyranny be overpast¹, and mortality swallowed up of life².*

6. O how frail is human nature, and how prone to sin! To-day you confess your sins, and to-morrow you will do again those very things which you have confessed. One moment you make a vow of being more careful in your conduct, and an hour afterwards you act as if you had made no such vow. Well therefore may we humble ourselves, and avoid all proud thoughts, being (as we are) so unstable and frail. Moreover it is very easy to lose, through neglect, that which it has taken much labour to acquire, and which we have obtained only through the grace of God.

7. What will become of us in the evening, if in the morning of life we are lukewarm and idle? Alas for us, if we think of taking our rest, as though in peace and safety, when there is not yet a trace of true holiness in our lives. We wish perhaps sometimes that we could have our course over again; but what hope is there that we should live more holily and pass our time to greater profit than we have done?

CHAP. XXIII. ON DEATH.

1. DEATH will soon come to you; consider therefore how you will meet it: to-day man is, to-morrow his place in this world is no more seen. And when man passes from sight, he soon passes also from memory. O how hard and dull is the human heart, which only thinks of the present, and makes no provision for the future! Consider that you ought so to order every

¹ Ps. lviii. 1.

² 2 Cor. v. 4.

thought and deed, as if you were going to die to-day. If you have a good conscience, you will not much fear death. It is much better to avoid sin, than to shrink from death. If you are not prepared to-day, how are you likely to be so to-morrow? To-morrow is uncertain; and how do you know that you will have a to-morrow?

2. What is the advantage of long life, unless we make use of it by daily growing better? Alas! long life frequently does not improve men, but only increases their guilt. O that we could spend one single day as it ought to be spent in this world! Many account themselves to be truly converted to God, but there is often very small fruit of their conversion. If it is a fearful thing to die, it may perchance be still more perilous to live. Happy is the man who has ever before his eyes the hour of death, and who daily prepares himself to die. If you have ever witnessed a death, consider that you must leave this world in the same way.

3. In the morning reflect that possibly you may not live till the evening. In the evening regard it as rash to reckon upon another morning. Be always ready, and so live that death may never find you unprepared. Many die suddenly and unexpectedly. For *at such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh*¹. When that last hour arrives, you will begin to view your whole life in a new light, and it will cause you infinite grief to think how negligent and slothful you have been.

4. How happy and wise is he, who strives during life to become such as he will wish to find himself when he comes to die. Happiness in the hour of death is to be sought in contempt of this world, a fervent desire of growth in holiness, repentance, self-denial, submission to God's will, suffering and doing for the love of Christ. Many good works may be done while you are in health; when sickness comes upon you, I do not know what you

¹ S. Matt. xxiv. 44.

can do. Very few are made better by sickness; if a man does not give himself up to God while he is in health, of what value is his sacrifice likely to be?

5.* Do not put off the thought of your salvation to a future time. Life is given you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling; after death comes the judgment. If you do not die in the grace of God, all the tears of your friends afterwards will not gain it for you. *Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation*¹. Alas, how many spend their labour upon that which satisfieth not; and perchance a time may come when they would give their all for a day or an hour in which to repent and amend, and who knows whether they can obtain it?

6. My dear friend, consider with yourself what dangers you would be freed from, what terrors you would escape, if only you were always thoughtful and fearful concerning your death! Study so to live now, that in the hour of death you may be joyful rather than alarmed. Learn now to die to the world, that then you may begin to live with Christ. Learn now to despise the things of this world, that then you may be unfettered in your departure to be with Christ. Give heed to repentance now, in order that you may have confidence and consolation then.

7. What folly it is to reckon upon long life, when you cannot be sure that you will live a day! How many deceive themselves in this way, and so are snatched out of the world without preparation! How often you may hear it said, Such an one has been drowned, another has been killed by a fall, another has been carried off in a few days by a fever, another has died from a fit of apoplexy. Thus death is the end of all, and the life of men is as a shadow which quickly passes away.

8. Up, up, dear friend, and be at work, while work you can; you know not when you may die, and you

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

know that you cannot work then. While you have time hoard up heavenly treasure. You will gain little, if you gain the whole world, and lose your own soul. Make yourself friends now, who, when you leave this world, will receive you into everlasting habitations¹.

9. Consider yourself always as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth. Keep your heart free, and ever directed toward God, because *here you have no continuing city*². Send up to Him daily your prayers and sighs, and if need be your tears, that after death your spirit may pass into bliss eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAP. XXIV. ON JUDGMENT AND PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

1. IN all that you do consider the end, and regard your actions as you will in that day when you stand before the Judge, from whom no secrets are hid, who takes no bribes and listens to no excuses, but gives just judgment. Ah miserable and foolish sinner, what answer will you make to God, who knows your secret faults? Why do you make no provision against the Day of Judgment, when no one will be able to excuse or defend another, but every man will have enough to do to answer for himself? *Now* your labour is not in vain, your tears are acceptable, your sighs are heard, your sorrow may lead to pardon.

2. He, who when he has received an injury grieves more because his neighbour is malicious than because he is himself harmed,—who prays for his enemies and forgives them from his heart,—who is not slow to ask pardon of others,—who is much more prone to mercy than anger,—who frequently does violence to his own wishes, and strives to subdue the flesh entirely to the spirit,—he who acts thus gives evidence that by the grace of God he has fought against and in a great measure conquered sin. It

¹ S. Luke xvi. 9.

² Heb. xiii. 14.

is better to conquer sin in this world than to be under its dominion in the world to come. But the flesh deceives us, we love those things which are pleasing to flesh and blood, and so we are betrayed into friendship with sin.

3.* The sins of mankind will be fuel for the eternal fire. All that is filthy and abominable, all lies and hypocrisy, all that God hates and which is not fit for heaven, must go into the everlasting burnings. Who shall speak the woe of outer darkness, which is darkened by the devil and his angels, and is not lightened by the light of God?

4.* Then it will be seen that there is indeed *no peace to the wicked*, and no happiness except in God. Then the ways of God to man will be justified, and it will be seen that *He has not done without cause all that He has done in the earth*. Then *many who are first will be last, and the last first*. Then shall the righteous stand with great boldness against such as have oppressed them. Then shall they who here have been judged stand forth as judges. Then shall the poor and humble have great confidence, and the proud shall be afraid. O see to it that you repent and forsake your sins, that so you may stand at the Judge's right hand and be blessed for evermore.

5. Then it will be seen that many, who were accounted fools and were despised for Christ's sake in this world, were truly wise. Then all tribulation which has been suffered patiently will appear sweet, *and the mouth of all wickedness be stopped*¹. Then the godly will triumph, and the ungodly will have cause to mourn. Then there will be more joy for some who have undergone affliction in this world, than for those whose bodies have been pampered with luxury. Then poor garments will seem beautiful, and purple and fine linen will be as dirty rags. Then the poor cottage will be more honourable than the gilded palace. Then patient endurance will be of higher price than the power of the whole world. Then simple

¹ Ps. cvii. 42.

faith and obedience will have precedence of all worldly wisdom.

6.* Then philosophy will be cheap as compared with a good conscience. Then contempt of wealth will outweigh all the treasures of the world. Then it will be seen that there is more solid comfort in devout prayer than in delicate living. Then you will find more satisfaction in the thought of having bridled your tongue than in the remembrance of having talked ever so cleverly. Then good works will be of more avail than fair words. Then a strict life and genuine repentance will bear more fruit than all earthly joys. Therefore make your choice; you cannot serve God and Mammon; if you gain the world you may perchance lose your own soul; and what will that profit you?

7. What will the honours and pleasures of this world profit you, when you come to die? All is vanity, except the love and service of God. He who heartily loves God fears neither death, nor punishment, nor judgment, nor Hell, because love gives him a secure access to God. But if a man delights in sin, it is no wonder that the thought of death and judgment should scare him. Yet it is well for him that this should be so; if love cannot lead him, it is well that the fear of Hell should at least restrain him. He however who is merely restrained thus, and is not influenced by the fear and love of God, will not maintain his steadfastness long, but will soon fall away into the snares of the devil.

CHAP. XXV. *ON EARNEST IMPROVEMENT
OF THE WHOLE LIFE.*

1. BE watchful and diligent in the service of God, and consider frequently what is the nature of your calling, and how God has taken you to be His own child. Press forward in your Christian course, for in due season you will receive the reward, if you faint not; and when you have reached the end, all grief and fear will have passed

away for ever. Then the labour which you have undergone will seem light, and the rest will be great, and the joy perpetual. If you remain faithful and earnest in your work, doubtless God will be faithful and abundant in rewarding you. Be full of hope that you will gain the prize; but do not be too secure, lest you become careless and idle.

2. Perhaps you have in your mind a longing feeling of desire to be assured that you will persevere to the end. You say, O if I only felt sure of persevering, how happy should I be! Well, dear friend, and what would you do, if you did receive this assurance? Whatever you would do then, do that same thing now, and that will be the best way to persevere. Commit yourself to God's will, and be sure that whatever it is good for you to know He will tell you. Do not be anxious concerning the future, but rather inquire what is the good and perfect will of God, and seek to begin, continue, and end every work that you undertake in accordance with that will.

3. *Hope in the Lord, and be doing good, saith the prophet; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed*¹. The thing which keeps back many from religious progress and earnest improvement is the dread of the difficulties and of the labour, in which a contest with their corruptions will involve them. In truth they make the greatest advances in holiness, who set themselves manfully to overcome every hindrance; for a man can only grow in grace, when he conquers himself and mortifies his own spirit.

4. All persons have not equally hard tasks to perform. But it is possible that by earnestness of purpose greater advance in holiness may be made by a man whose passions are naturally strong and temper unfavourable, than by one whose natural advantages are greater but who is careless in spiritual matters. Two things are of special assistance in religious improvement: namely, firmness in withdrawing ourselves from all evil to which our natural

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 3.

inclination may lead us, and earnestness in striving after those excellences of character in which we may perceive ourselves to be deficient. Study likewise to guard against, and to subdue in yourself, whatever is displeasing to you when you observe it in others.

5. Be ever on the watch to see and hear good examples, in order that you may be stirred up to imitate them. On the other hand, if you observe anything wrong in others, take good heed to avoid the same fault yourself: or if you have done the like, endeavour at once to amend and do so no more. Remember that as your eye is upon others, so the eyes of others are upon you. How sweet and pleasant it is to see true practical holiness in the lives of Christ's servants! How sad and painful to see them walking in the ways of sin and in a manner unworthy of their profession! How injurious to the soul to have received a solemn call from God, and to act as though they belonged to this world and not to Him!

6. Be mindful of the vows of your Baptism, and ever keep before your eyes the picture of Christ crucified. You may well feel ashamed, when you contemplate the life of Jesus Christ, that though taken into God's family you have hitherto done so little to conform your own life to His. He who exercises his mind earnestly and with devotion in the contemplation of the life and passion of the Lord, will find in the contemplation an abundant supply of all things useful and necessary to his soul; nor need he look beyond Jesus for any better portion. O if Christ crucified had really entered into our hearts, how speedily and how thoroughly should we be instructed in all that we require to know!

7. A man who walks with God knows how to bear with patience all that it pleases God to bring upon him. A man who is indifferent and lukewarm finds much weariness in religion, and has a double loss, because, while he dares not thoroughly indulge in the pleasures of this world, he yet has not those joys which arise from the

inward consolation of Christ in his heart. A man who lives without watchfulness and self-denial is liable to fall into ruin. He who tries to serve God and Mammon will find himself in the dilemma of the man who has two masters.

8.* There have been in all ages, and doubtless there are still, noble examples of men who have given themselves up heart and soul to the service of Christ. There have been those who, after the example of the Apostles, have gone through the world to preach the Gospel to the Heathen; there have been those also, who in their own country have sacrificed much, in order that they might win Christ themselves and cause Him to be glorified by their brethren; and there have been those, who in the quiet path of home duties have imitated their Lord and so taught others to imitate Him too. With such examples 'before you, encompassed by such a cloud of witnesses, do you also lay aside every weight, and think it a shame to be lukewarm in your heavenly work.

9.* Sometimes in a fit of fervour you may feel disposed to say, "O that we had nothing else to do in this world but to praise the Lord with our whole heart! O that we had no occasion to eat or drink or sleep, but that we could always praise God, and give ourselves entirely to spiritual exercises! O what happiness would then be ours!" Yet such aspirations may not be to your profit: God has placed you in this world, and has bid you do your duty in it, and while you are in it not to be of it: and He has so placed you, because it is best for you; and by following the leading of His providence you will in reality grow more in grace, than by any scheme of life which you could devise for yourself.

10. When a man arrives at such a state of mind that he does not seek consolation in any creature, then he begins truly to live to God; then also he will be happy concerning all outward circumstances, because he *knows* that all things work together for good. Then he


is not exalted by prosperity, nor cast down by adversity; but he reposes wholly and with entire trust upon God, who is to him all in all, to whom nothing perishes or dies, but all things live, and to whose nod all things implicitly bow.

11. Ever bear in mind your end, and that time lost never returns. Without earnestness and diligence you will never excel in holiness. If you begin to wax cold, it will soon be ill with you. But if you give yourself earnestly to live a Christian life, you will find abundant peace, and you will experience the truth of the Lord's words, that *His yoke is easy and His burden light*. A man in earnest is equal to any task. To resist vices and passions is harder work than bodily labour. He who is not careful to avoid small faults easily falls into great ones. If you spend the day profitably, you will always find cause to rejoice in the evening. Watch yourself, bestir yourself, admonish yourself; and take heed lest gaining much in this world you should lose your own soul. The kingdom of Heaven is not for the indolent; *the violent take it by force*. Amen.

BOOK II.

HINTS CONCERNING THE INNER LIFE.

CHAP. I. ON THE INWARD THOUGHTS.

 HE kingdom of God is within you¹, saith the Lord. Turn yourself with all your heart to the Lord, and unfix your affections from this sinful world, and you shall find rest for your soul. Learn to think little of external things, and to give your thoughts to things internal, and you will find that the kingdom of God will enter into you. For the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost², and this is not given to the unholy. Christ will come to you, giving you His own consolation, if you prepare Him a worthy mansion within. All His glory and honour are from within, and there it pleaseth Him to dwell. He who frequently entertains Christ will have sweet discourse with Him, comfort and consolation, much peace, a friendship too wonderful for the heart of man to have conceived.

2. Well then, faithful soul, prepare thy heart to receive this Spouse, since He for His part condescends to come and dwell with thee. For He hath said Himself: *If any man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and take up our abode with him*³. Make a place therefore for Christ, and refuse admittance to all others. When you possess Christ, you are rich, and have abundance. He will provide for you and take care of you in all things, so that you shall have no need to put your trust in men.

¹ S. Luke xvii. 21.

² Rom. xiv. 17.

³ S. John xiv. 23.

For men change, and quickly pass away; but Christ remaineth for ever, and continueth firm to the end.

3. There is no great confidence to be placed in a frail and mortal man, even though he be one whom we love right well; nor need we give way to much sadness, if such an one should sometimes grow cold and unkind. They who are your friends to-day may possibly have their minds turned against you to-morrow. Put your whole trust in God; let Him be your fear and Him your love. He will answer for you, and do better for you than you can for yourself. *Here you have no continuing city*¹, and wherever you are you are a stranger and foreigner, nor will you ever find rest unless you are closely united with Christ.

4. Why do you cast your eyes hither and thither, as if this were the place of your rest? Your true home is in Heaven, and all earthly things are to be regarded as by one on his journey home. All things pass away, and you with them. Take care not to look upon them and long for them, lest you be entangled with them and perish. Let your thoughts be with the Most Highest, and let your prayers without ceasing be directed to Christ. If you cannot raise your mind to the contemplation of high and heavenly things, rest upon the Passion of Christ, and dwell on His sacred wounds. For if you betake yourself with earnest devotion to the contemplation of the Lord's Cross and Passion, you will find great comfort in tribulation, nor will you give much heed to the contempt of men, and you will easily bear unkind words.

5. Christ was despised and rejected of men, and in His utmost need was deserted by His disciples and friends. Christ consented to suffer and to be despised, and do you dare to complain? Christ had enemies and slanderers, and do you expect to have none but friends and benefactors? How shall your patience be crowned, if you meet with no adversity? If you shrink from suffering

¹ Heb. xiii. 14.

anything that is contrary to your wishes, how shall you be the friend of Christ? If you would reign with Christ, you must suffer with Him and for Him.

6. If you had once entered into the heart of Jesus, and tasted but a little of His love, then you would think nothing of your own private comfort or discomfort, but would rather rejoice in reproach, because the love of Jesus makes a man think little of himself. He who truly loves Jesus, and by love of Him is freed from less worthy affections, is able to turn to God in perfect liberty, and to rise in spirit above himself, and to rest in God and be satisfied.

7. He who estimates all things as they really are, and not as they are said or as they appear to be, is the truly wise man and is beyond others taught of God. He who walks by the guidance of inward principle, and sets outward things at their real value, is independent of circumstances and can worship God at all times and in all places. He who is strengthened by this same inward principle easily recovers himself if he finds himself in danger, because he never allows himself to depend wholly upon outward things. All conditions of life are the same to him, because whatever may be the circumstances in which he is placed he knows how to adapt himself to them. He whose mind is thus well regulated will look down unmoved upon the perverse ways of men. The more a man is engaged with the things of this world, the more is he distracted and hindered in his Christian course.

8. If you were thoroughly purged and such as you ought to be, all things would tend to your good and to your spiritual progress. As it is there is much to trouble and displease you, because you are not yet perfectly dead to self, nor weaned from earthly things. Nothing so defiles and entangles the heart of man, as unholy love of the creature. If you can make up your mind to give up outward comfort, you will be able to contemplate the *things of Heaven*, and to have abundant joy within.

CHAP. II. ON HUMBLE SUBMISSION.

1. Do not trouble yourself much who may be for you or who against you, but give diligence so to act that God may be with you in all you do. Keep your conscience pure, and God will protect you: and human perversity cannot injure those whom God vouchsafes to defend. If you know how to be patient, beyond doubt you will receive help from the Lord. He Himself knows best the time and manner of delivering you, and therefore it is for you to resign yourself to Him. God will help you and that right early. It is often of great advantage to be taught lessons in humility, for others see our faults when perhaps we have not had our eyes open to them ourselves.

2. When a man is humbled by a sense of his own defects, then he easily pardons those of his neighbours, and makes peace readily with those who grieve him. God protects and delivers the humble, He loves and comforts the humble, it is the humble man to whom He stoops, it is the humble to whom He gives increased grace, and whom after his humiliation He exalts to glory: to the humble He reveals His secrets, while He gently draws him towards Himself. The humble man in his worst condition is still at peace, because he rests upon God and not upon the world. Never think that you have made good progress in the Christian life, until you feel yourself to be least and lowest of all.

CHAP. III. ON THE CHARACTER OF THE PEACEMAKER.

1. FIRST gain peace for yourself, and then you will be able to make peace amongst others. The peacemaker is of more value than he who can write learned books. A mischievous person can turn good into evil, and easily believes harm of his neighbours: the peace-

maker turns all things to good. The man who is himself at peace is harassed by no suspicions; but he who is discontented and restless can neither be at peace himself nor permit others to be so. He often says things which he ought not to say, and omits things which it would be well for him to do. He troubles himself about his neighbour's business and neglects his own. Let your first concern therefore be with yourself, and then you may more fitly concern yourself with the condition of your neighbour.

2. You know well how to put the best face upon your own deeds, and you are unwilling to receive the excuses of others. It would be much more just, that you should accuse yourself, and excuse your brother. If you wish to have your own burden carried, help to carry those of others. See how far you must still be from true charity and humility, which admits no wrath or indignation, except against itself. It is no great thing to conduct yourself fittingly with the good and gentle; for this is natural, and any one can be at peace with those who will not quarrel, and there is no trial to the temper when persons think with us: but to live peaceably with those who are perverse and hard, and unruly, and rude and unkind to us, this shews the operation of the grace of God, and the conduct is praiseworthy and manly.

3. There are those who are peaceable themselves, and live at peace with others. And there are those who neither enjoy peace themselves, nor allow others to enjoy it; such persons are troublesome to others, but they are ten times more troublesome to themselves. And there are those who themselves enjoy peace, and who do their best to make peace amongst others. But peace as it can be understood in this world is rather to be expected to flow from patient suffering, than from the absence of all crosses. He who best knows how to *suffer*, will enjoy the greatest peace: *he* is the conqueror

of himself and the master of the world, the friend of Christ and the heir of Heaven.

CHAP. IV. *ON PURITY OF HEART AND SIMPLICITY OF PURPOSE.*

1. MAN has two wings wherewith to rise above the earth, simplicity and purity. Simplicity of purpose, purity of affection. Simplicity reaches out towards God, purity apprehends and enjoys Him. No good action will be beyond your power, if you are free within from inordinate lusts and affections. If your mind is set upon nothing but the will of God and the welfare of your neighbour, you will enjoy liberty within. If your heart be right with God, then every creature is a book of holy teaching. There is no creature so small and contemptible as to be incapable of giving a lesson concerning the goodness of God.

2. If you were good and pure within, then you would see all things and understand all things. The pure in heart see God. As a man's heart is within, so is his judgment of things without. If joy be possible in this world, then the pure in heart possess it; and if there be tribulation and distress, these are found especially in company with an evil conscience. As the fire purifies iron, so a man who truly turns to God is set free from sin, and changed into a new creature.

3. When a man becomes lukewarm, he shrinks from exertion, and craves for outward comfort. But when he begins to conquer himself thoroughly, and to walk manfully in the way of God, then he thinks little of those things which once seemed to him grievous and hard to bear.

CHAP. V. *ON THE RIGHT MODE OF REGARDING ONESELF.*

1. WE must not put too much confidence in ourselves, because often we are deficient both in grace and wisdom. The light vouchsafed to us is not great at best,

and it is easily lost by neglect. Frequently also we are blind and do not know it. Frequently we do what is bad, and make it worse by our excuses. Sometimes we are stirred by passion, and fancy that we are under the influence of a holy zeal. We blame small faults in others, and pass over much worse in ourselves. We quickly perceive and dwell upon the injuries which we have to bear from others; but we do not perceive how much others have to bear from us. He who weighs well and truly his own defects will not form harsh judgments of others.

2. The man who looks within always finds abundance of work in his own heart; and he who is busy about the business of his own soul has no difficulty in keeping silence concerning others. Religion will never flourish in your heart, until you have learned to be silent concerning others, and very careful in your examination of yourself. If your whole mind is fixed upon God and your own soul, you will be little moved by what you may see going on around you. You cannot get away from yourself; and if you give your mind to never so many things, what will it profit you if you neglect your own spiritual concerns? If you would have peace and true union with God, it is absolutely necessary that you should fix your eyes upon your own soul and keep everything else in the background.

3. In order to advance in the divine life you must guard against being ensnared by the cares of this world: if you set your heart upon worldly things, you will quickly go backward. Let nothing be deemed by you really great, nothing exalted, nothing to be loved, nothing to be prized, which is not either of God or else is God Himself. Consider that the creature is weak, and all the comfort it can give vain. The soul which loves God despises all that is less than God. God alone is eternal, and immeasurable; He fills all things; He is the consolation of the soul, and the true joy of the human heart.

CHAP. VI. ON THE HAPPINESS ARISING
FROM A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

1. THE glory¹ of a good man is the testimony of a good conscience. Keep a good conscience, and you will have a constant spring of happiness. A good conscience can endure many things, and is able to be joyful in adversity: an evil conscience is ever fearful and restless. If your heart does not condemn you, you may have peace with God. Beware of feeling joyful, except in well doing. Wicked men have never true joy, nor do they feel peace within, for *there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*². And if they say, "We are at peace, no evils will come upon us, and who will dare to hurt us?" do not believe them: for the wrath of God shall suddenly rise against them, and their deeds shall come to nought, and their thoughts perish.

2. He who loves God can *glory even in tribulation*; for thus to glory is to *glory in the cross of the Lord*³. The glory which men receive one from another is but short lived. The glory of the world is ever accompanied by sorrow. The glory of good men is in their own consciences, and not in the mouths of other men. The joy of the just is from God and in God, and their joy is true. He who seeks the true and eternal glory, cares not for the glory of this world: and he who seeks the glory of this world, or does not in his heart despise it, is little capable of loving the glory of Heaven. He has the true secret of peace, who sets at their right value both praise and blame alike.

3. He, whose conscience is pure, will easily be contented and at peace. You are none the holier for being praised, and none the viler for being blamed. You are what you are; nor is it any advantage to you to be esteemed to be better than you are held to be by the

¹ Compare 2 Cor. i. 12.

² Isai. lvii. 21.

³ Rom. v. 3. Gal. vi. 14.

just judgment of God. If you fix your thoughts upon what is going on within you, you will not heed what men say concerning you. *Man looketh at the outward appearance, but God seeth the heart*¹: man considers the outward acts, but God truly weighs the intention with which they are done. To act well, and not to be proud of doing so, is the real mark of humility. To shrink from resting in the comforts of this world, is a mark of purity of heart and of confidence in God.

4. When a man seeks for no human testimony to his goodness, then he makes it plain that he has wholly committed his ways to God. *For not he that commendeth himself is approved*, saith S. Paul, *but whom the Lord commendeth*². To walk with God in the thoughts and intents of the heart, and not to be diverted from Him by affection for anything lower than Himself—this is the right condition for the soul of man.

CHAP. VII. ON LOVING JESUS ABOVE ALL THINGS.

1. BLESSED is the man, who knows what it is to love Jesus, and to count himself as nothing for Jesus' sake. All things beloved must be given up for the Beloved, who claims all our love. The love of the creature is deceitful and unstable; the love of Jesus is faithful and enduring. He who depends upon the creature, will perish when the creature perishes; he who rests on Jesus will be preserved eternally. Love Him, and make Him your friend, who will not leave you when all other supports fail, and will not suffer you to perish. Remember that you must be separated some day from all other things whether you will or no.

2. Hold fast to Jesus in life and death, and commit yourself to Him, who alone is able to supply all your needs. Your beloved is so minded that He will not admit a rival to a share of your heart, but desires to

¹ 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

² 2 Cor. x. 18.

possess it alone, and to sit as a king upon His own throne. If you can set yourself free from the love of all creatures, then Jesus will willingly dwell with you. All love spent upon the creature you will find to be little else than mere loss. Do not lean upon a broken reed, for *all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field*¹.

3. You will find yourself deceived if you look only to the outward appearance of men: for if you seek your own consolation and gain in others, you will generally meet with disappointment. If you seek Jesus in all things, you will everywhere find Jesus; and if you seek self, then you will everywhere find self, but you will find it to your grief. A man who does not seek Jesus is more injurious to himself, than all his enemies or indeed than the whole world besides.

CHAP. VIII. ON INTIMATE COMMUNION WITH THE LORD JESUS.

1. WHEN Jesus is present all goes well, and nothing seems hard; but when Jesus is away, there is nothing but difficulty. When Jesus does not speak within us, there is no comfort; but if He speak only one word, there is abundant consolation. Did not Mary at once rise from the place where she was weeping, when Martha said to her, *The Master is come, and calleth for thee?* O happy hour, when Jesus calls thee from tears to spiritual joy! How barren and hard is the heart without Him! How foolish and vain you must be, if you desire anything beside Him! Is not this a greater loss, than if you should lose the whole world?

2. What can the world without Jesus give you? To be without Jesus is Hell; to be with Him is Paradise. If Jesus be with you, no enemy can hurt you. He who finds Jesus, finds a great treasure, yea, a treasure above all treasures; and he who loses Jesus loses more than the

¹ Isai. xl. 6.

whole world. He who lives near to Jesus is rich beyond all the rich men of this world, and he who lives without Him is the poorest of the poor.

3. It is a great art to know how to comport oneself in the company of the Lord Jesus, and it is a mark of great prudence if we keep Him ever near to us. Be humble and gentle, and Jesus will be with you; be earnest and devout, and He will abide with you. You may easily drive Him away from you, and lose His grace, if you take your heart from Him to set it upon things of this world. And if you do drive Him away and lose Him, to whom will you fly, and what friend will you seek? You cannot live happily without a friend, and if Jesus is not to you the chief of friends, you will be desolate and sad. You act like a fool therefore, if you trust in any other. It is much better to have the whole world against you, than not to have Jesus as your friend. Of all those who are dear to you, Jesus should be He whom you count the dearest.

4. Love all men for the sake of Jesus Christ, but Him alone for His own sake. Jesus Christ is to be loved so as no other person ought to be, because He is a friend good and faithful beyond all others. For His sake and in Him enemies as well as friends must be dear to you; and you must pray to Him on behalf of them all, that all may know and love Him. Never desire to be especially praised or loved, because this should be reserved for God alone, who has no one like Himself. Neither be anxious that any one should have his whole heart set upon you, nor do you set your heart wholly upon any, but let Jesus Christ be in you and in every other good man.

5. Be pure within and free from excessive attachment to creatures. You must carry your heart bare and open before God, if you would be set at liberty, and see *how gracious the Lord is*¹. And in truth you will never

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 8.

arrive at this condition, unless His grace prevent and follow you, so that being set free from all other things you may be united to Him alone. For when the grace of God comes to a man, then he becomes capable of all things; and when God's grace is lost, then he becomes weak and poor. Do not however be cast down, nor despair, but resign yourself to God's will, and bear all things which come upon you to the glory of Jesus Christ; for after winter comes summer, after night day, and after the storm a great calm.

CHAP. IX. *ON THE ABSENCE OF ALL
COMFORT.*

1. It is no difficult task to despise human comfort, when we are supported by divine. It is a great, yea, a very great thing to submit to the loss of human and divine consolation as well, and for the love of God to bear patiently the hiding of His face, and yet not to rest in oneself nor to lean upon one's own merits. What wonder is it, if you experience joy and peace, when God's grace shines upon you? Every one can do as much as this.

He moves with ease on life's hard road,
Who leans upon the grace of God.

And what wonder if he does not feel his burden, who is supported by the Omnipotent, and led by the Divine Guide.

2.* We readily seize upon anything that wears the face of consolation, and a man is with difficulty taught not to lean upon himself. The saints who have subdued the world are those who have seen in it nothing really worthy of being delighted in; and there have been many examples of men who have learned the weakness of all human supports and how to rest securely upon the un-failing promises and purposes of God. You too must learn to think nothing of all that this world has to offer in comparison with the love of God. And if your dearest

friend should fail you, you must learn that we must sooner or later be separated from all friends, and that there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother.

3. Much internal conflict will be necessary, before a man will learn thoroughly to subdue himself, and to set his whole affection upon God. As long as a man depends upon self, he is easily led away to rest on human consolations. But the true lover and earnest follower of Christ will not so rest, nor does he seek for sensible delights; he desires rather to have his faith more exercised, and to be permitted to undergo severer labours for Christ's sake.

4. When therefore God vouchsafes spiritual consolation, receive it thankfully, but remember that it is God's gift, and not your own desert. Do not be puffed up, do not be too much elated, and beware of presumption; rather let the gift make you more humble, more cautious and fearful of offending in all your acts, since the season of consolation will soon pass away, and then may come one of trial. Do not however at once despair, when consolation is taken from you; but wait in humility and patience for a visit from Heaven, for God is able to give you back again more than you have lost. This is no new or strange thing in Christian experience; such changes have been felt by the greatest Saints and by the Prophets of old time.

5. So it was that in the sunshine of God's grace David said, *I shall never be removed*. But when God's grace was taken away he discovered what he was in himself, and then he added, *Thou turnedst away Thy face, and I was troubled*. He does not however despair, but makes his prayer to the Lord the more earnestly, and says; *I will call unto Thee, O Lord, and get me to my Lord right humbly*. And finally he reaps the fruit of his prayer, and bears witness that God has heard him, saying, *Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy, Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness*¹.

¹ Ps. xxx.

If thus it has been with great Saints, the poor and weak need not despair if sometimes they find themselves full of fervour and sometimes cold; for the Spirit cometh and goeth according to the good pleasure of His own will. So that Job was led to say, *What is man that Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment*¹?

6. In what therefore can I hope, or in what place my confidence, save only in the great mercy of God and in the hope of heavenly grace? For even when I enjoy the society of good men and faithful friends, and holy books and helps to devotion, and sweet psalms and hymns, all these things are but of little help, and give little pleasure, if I be deserted by God's grace and left in my own poverty. In such sad case I know of no better remedy than patience and submission to God's will.

7. I have never met with any one so holy and so steadfast in the Christian life, that he never experienced any loss of God's grace or any diminution of religious fervour. There never was a saint so rapt and illuminated, as not to be liable to temptation. Indeed he is not worthy of deep contemplation of God, who has not undergone some tribulation for God's sake. For temptation is but the pledge of consolation to follow; and it is the man who has resisted temptation to whom the heavenly promise is made: *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life*².

8. Divine consolation is vouchsafed to a man, that he may become stronger to resist evil. Temptation follows, lest he should become over-confident and think too much of the good that is in him. The devil never sleeps, nor is the flesh yet dead; therefore you must not cease to keep yourself in readiness for the combat, because you have enemies on the right hand and on the left, who are never idle, but ever on the watch to do you harm.

¹ Job vii. 18.

² Rev. ii. 7.

CHAP. X. *ON GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S GRACE.*

1. WHY do you seek rest, seeing that you are born to labour? (Think of patience rather than of consolation, and of carrying the cross rather than of enjoying continual peace.) For who would not have consolation and peace, if he knew how to obtain them? Do not spiritual consolations surpass all the delights of this world, and all the pleasures of the flesh? For all the delights of this world are either vain or base; but spiritual joys are satisfying, they alone are the offspring of holiness, and they are the gift of God to the pure in heart. But no one can by his own power ensure the constant presence of divine consolations, because as yet the period of trial is not brought to a close.

2. A false notion of liberty, and great self-confidence, stand very much in the way of the communications of God's grace. God is mercifully ready to grant the grace of consolation, but man is not always ready to return his thanks for God's gift. And thus we often hinder the gifts of grace from flowing upon us, because we are ungrateful towards the Author of grace, and do not replenish the fountain by our thanks. For grace is ever given to him who returns gratitude, and that is taken away from the proud which is bestowed freely upon the humble.

3. I would rather not have consolation, if it prevent me from feeling compunction; nor do I desire that vision of divine things which is likely to exalt me above measure. For it is not every step in holiness, nor every really good thing, nor every pure desire, nor everything which God loves, that is pleasant to ourselves. I thankfully accept that grace, which leaves me more humble and fearful of going astray, and by which I become more ready to relinquish dependence upon myself. He who *knows what the gift of God's grace is, and has been*

disciplined by knowing what it is to lose that grace, will not dare to attribute to himself any good thing, but will rather confess himself poor and naked. *Give unto God the things that are God's*¹, and ascribe to yourself the things which are your own; that is to say, give God gratitude for grace, but attribute all faults to yourself alone, and acknowledge that your faults deserve to be punished.

4. *Take the lowest room*², and so you will be called to *go up higher*. The greatest saints are they who have seemed to themselves the least, and the more glorious they have been in reality so much the more humble have they been in their own estimation; they who are full of truth and the glory of heaven are not covetous of vain-glory; they who are established and settled in God cannot by any means be puffed up with empty thoughts of themselves. And they who ascribe to God whatever good thing they may have received, do not *seek glory one of another*, but that *glory which is of God only*³, and they desire that God alone should be glorified in them and in all saints, and that this may be so is ever their own aim and purpose.

5. Be grateful therefore for the smallest gifts of God, and so will you be counted worthy to receive greater. Let the smallest thing have in your eyes the value of the greatest, and that which might appear trifling be counted as a special mark of favour. If the dignity of the Giver be considered, no gift can appear small or trifling; for that can neither be small nor trifling which is given by Almighty God. Even if He give you pain and stripes, you should thank Him, because He ever does for our eternal well-being whatever He allows us to suffer here. Let him who wishes to retain the grace of God be grateful when grace is given, patient when it is taken away. Let him pray for its return; let him be cautious and humble, lest he lose it.

¹ S. Matt. xxii. 21. ² S. Luke xiv. 10. ³ S. John v. 44.

CHAP. XI. *ON THE SMALLNESS OF THE
NUMBER OF THOSE WHO LOVE THE
CROSS OF CHRIST.*

1. THERE are many who are willing to reign with Christ in glory, but few who are willing to bear His Cross. There are many who are glad to partake of comfort, but few of tribulation; many ready to feast with Him, but few to fast. All desire to enter into His joy, few to bear anything for His sake. Many follow Jesus to eat of His bread, but few to drink the cup of His Passion. Many venerate His miracles, few accept the ignominy of the Cross. Many love Christ, as long as all goes well. Many praise Him and bless Him, as long as they receive consolation at His hands; but if Jesus hide Himself for a time and leave them, they are cast down and fall to complaining.

2. But they who love Jesus for His own sake, and not for any advantage that they receive from Him, bless and praise Him in the depth of affliction and adversity, as earnestly as when they are most filled with comfort. And if it pleased Him never to grant them the sense of consolation again, they would yet ever praise Him, and ever give Him thanks.

3. O how powerful is the pure love of Jesus, when unmixed with any love of self! Are not they mercenary, who desire to enjoy perpetual consolation? Do not they love themselves rather than Christ, who always consider their own gain and advantage? Where shall the man be found, who will serve God wholly for love?

4. You seldom find a man so spiritual, as to be entirely weaned from all earthly things. Where will you find the man who is truly poor in spirit? A man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet may be nothing: and he may make a great show of penitence, and yet little good may come of it; and he may have *all knowledge*, and yet he may be far from what he

should be; and he may have great virtue and ardent devotion, and yet much may be lacking; he may in fact lack that one thing which is absolutely needful. And what is that one thing? Surely, that leaving all things for Christ's sake he should leave self, go (so to speak) entirely out of himself, utterly extinguish selfishness; and when he has done all things which he knows ought to be done, that he should feel in his heart that he has done nothing.

5. Let him not think much of deeds which others may be disposed to estimate highly, but rather declare himself to be in truth an unprofitable servant, as the Truth saith, *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do*¹. And when a man can do this, then he will be truly poor in spirit, and will be able to say with the Psalmist, *I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me*². Yet no man is richer, no man more powerful, no man more free, than he who knows how to give up everything and to hold the most lowly opinion of himself.

CHAP. XII. ON THE ROYAL ROAD OF THE HOLY CROSS.

1. THAT saying seems hard to many: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me*³. But that other saying will seem much harder: *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*⁴. For they who now listen to the saying concerning the cross and attend to it, will not then have to tremble at the saying concerning everlasting fire. When Christ who was once crucified for sins comes again to judgment, then they who have conformed their lives to the life of the Crucified will be able with confidence to meet Christ the Judge.

¹ S. Luke xvii. 10. ² Ps. xl. 20. ³ S. Matt. xvi. 24.

⁴ S. Matt. xxv. 41.

2. Why hesitate therefore to bear the cross, by which you may gain the crown? In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross is safety from enemies; in the cross is that peace which the world cannot give, in the cross is courage, in the cross is joy; in the cross is the sum of all virtues, in the cross the perfection of holiness. There is no salvation for the soul, no hope of eternal life, in any thing else. *Take up your cross* therefore and follow Jesus, and so you will enter into eternal life. He Himself went before carrying His own cross, and died for you upon the cross, that you also may carry your cross and be crucified upon it. *If you die with Him, you will also live with Him¹*; and if you are a partner of His sufferings, you shall also be a partner of His glory.

3. The cross is the beginning and the end, and all who would live must first die; there is no other way to life and to real inward peace but the way of the Holy Cross and of daily mortification. Go where you will, do what you may, you will find no higher way above and no safer way below, than the way of the Holy Cross. Dispose and order all things according to your judgment and your wishes, and still you will find that willingly or unwillingly there will always be something for you to suffer, and so you will always find the Cross. You will ever find that there is some bodily pain or some tribulation of spirit to be endured.

4. Sometimes you will feel yourself to be deserted by God, sometimes you will have sorrow in your friends, and (what is more) you will often find causes of sadness in your own heart; nor will you be able to find any effectual remedy or consolation, but will have to bear your grief as long as it pleases God to afflict you. For it is the will of God, that you should learn to suffer tribulation without consolation, and that you should submit yourself to Him completely, and be made more

¹ Rom. vi. 8.

humble by tribulation. No one feels so thoroughly the intensity of Christ's sufferings, as he who has suffered something of the like kind himself. Therefore the Cross is always prepared for you and awaits you, be you where you may. Go where you will, you cannot escape it; and that because you carry it with you, and you cannot flee from yourself. Turn to this hand, or turn to that, and you will still find the Cross, and you must needs possess your soul in patience, if you would have peace within, and in the end gain the crown.

5. If you carry the Cross willingly, it will carry you; and it will bring you to the wished for end, where indeed there will be an end of suffering, although there be no such end here. If you carry it unwillingly, you will find it a burden, and it will press heavily upon you; and you will have to carry it notwithstanding this. If you throw away one cross, beyond doubt you will find another, and that perchance heavier than the cross you threw away.

6. Do you think to escape that which no mortal has yet been able to avoid? Which of the Saints has been without a cross and without tribulation? Nor indeed was Jesus Christ our Lord during all His life otherwise than *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*. It was necessary, as Christ Himself said, that He *should* suffer and so enter into His glory¹. And how then can you look for any other than this royal way, which is the way of the Holy Cross?

7. The whole life of Christ was a Cross and Passion; and do you look for rest and joy? You are wrong, you are wrong, if you desire anything else except to suffer trials, because the whole of this mortal life is full of misery and set round with crosses. And the further a Christian has advanced in spiritual things, so much the more heavy will he find the crosses to be; because, the

¹ S. Luke xxiv. 26.

greater the intensity of love, the greater is the pain which arises from the hiding of God's face.

8. Nevertheless though a man be thus abundantly afflicted, he will not be without consolation, because he will perceive the advantages which spring from bearing the cross. For so long as he bears it willingly, all the burden of suffering turns to an assurance of divine consolation. And the more the outer man decays, so much the more is the inner man strengthened day by day. And sometimes it has come about that trial and adversity have so strengthened the mind and produced such a desire to be conformed to the spirit of Christ, that grief and pain have been counted as nothing, and to suffer for Christ has been deemed a pleasure. It is not the strength of the man, but the grace of Christ, which is able so to act upon weak flesh, as to make it welcome with delight things from which it naturally shrinks.

9. It is not the taste of the natural man to bear the cross, to love the cross, to keep under the body and bring it into subjection, to hold back from honours, to bear reproach patiently, to think little of himself and to be content to be thought little of, to be cheerful in adversity, and not to be anxious about prosperity. If you depend upon your own strength, you will not be able to accomplish anything of this kind; but if you trust in the Lord, He will give you strength from above, and the world and the flesh will be prostrate before you. Nor need you fear your adversary the devil, if you be armed with faith and marked with Christ's cross.

10. Set yourself therefore, as a good and faithful servant of Christ, to carry manfully the Cross of your Lord, who was crucified for you because He loved you. Prepare yourself to bear much adversity and divers hardships in this present life, because so it will be wherever you may be placed; and so you will find it to be, hide yourself where you will. It ought to be so; and there *is no remedy* for the pains and sorrows of this world,

except to bear them patiently. If you desire to have a share in your Lord's kingdom, you must drink of His cup. Commit yourself to God; let Him comfort you as it seems good to Him. But do you set yourself to bear troubles, and consider them your chief comforts: for *the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory which will be revealed* in the faithful servants of the Lord.

11. When you have arrived at this point, that you can even *joy in tribulation*, then you may consider that you have found Paradise upon earth. As long as you fret at tribulation and try to avoid it, so long you will find it ever at hand to torment you.

12. If you consider that God in His wisdom has made trouble in this world the lot of those whom He loves, you will soon find peace. Though you be *carried up to the third Heaven* with S. Paul, you are not on that account exempt from trouble. *I will shew him*, said Jesus, *how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake*. It is for you therefore no less than for S. Paul to suffer, if like him you wish to love Jesus and to obey Him.

13. O that you were truly worthy of suffering for the sake of Christ's Name! What a weight of glory would be laid up for you, how great would be the joy in heaven, what a blessing would your life and conversation be to your brethren! For every one can talk of patience, although few are willing to suffer patiently. And after all you ought not to have much difficulty in suffering a little for Christ's sake, seeing how much men are content to suffer when they have a worldly end in view.

14. You know well that your true wisdom is to live as one dead to this world; and the more truly a man is dead to this world, so much the more really does he live to God. No man is fit to comprehend heavenly things, unless he has learned to suffer for Christ. No-

thing is more acceptable to God, nothing more healthful for yourself, than to be willing to suffer for Christ's sake. And if you had your choice, you should rather choose to suffer for Christ, than to be refreshed with abundant consolation, for thus you would be more conformed to His likeness. For the excellence of the Christian character is seen not so much in the enjoyment of consolation as in the patient endurance of affliction.

15. If there had been anything better and more profitable for human salvation than suffering, Christ would have told us so by word and example. But He exhorted His disciples and those who wished to follow Him to bear the cross, and *He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*¹. When therefore you have read and examined the whole matter, let this be your final conclusion: *That we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*².

¹ S. Luke ix. 23.

² Acts xiv. 22.

BOOK III.

CONCERNING INWARD CONSOLATION.

CHAP. I. ON INWARD COMMUNION OF CHRIST WITH THE FAITHFUL SOUL.



WILL hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me¹. Blessed is the soul, which hears the Lord speaking within her, and which receives from His mouth words of consolation.

Blessed are the ears which hear the whispers of the still small voice, and are not affected by the whisperings of this world. Blessed are the ears, which do not listen to the noise without, but to that voice which speaks the truth within. Blessed are the eyes, which look within, rather than without. Blessed are they, who can penetrate into the things within, and who strive to fit themselves more and more by daily exercise to receive heavenly mysteries. Blessed are they, whose hearts are in communion with God, and free from all hindrances of this world. Attend to these things, O my soul, and shut up all the avenues of sense, that thou mayest be able to hear what the Lord God will say concerning thee.

2. These things saith the Beloved: "*I am thy salvation*"², thy peace, thy life: keep thyself near to Me, and thou shalt find peace. Set not thine heart upon things temporal, strive for things eternal. What are temporal things, but so many snares in thy way? And of what profit are all creatures, if thou be deserted by thy Creator? Therefore setting aside all other things give Thyself up wholly to thy Creator, and so wilt thou be able to apprehend the fulness of blessedness and joy."

¹ Ec. lxxv. 8.

² Ps. xxiv. 3.

CHAP. II. *HOW THE TRUTH SPEAKS WITH-
IN WITHOUT NOISE OF WORDS.*

1. *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth*¹. *I am Thy servant, grant me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies*². *Incline my heart unto the words of Thy mouth*³; *let Thy speech distil as the dew*⁴. The children of Israel in old time said to Moses: *Speak thou to us, and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die*⁵. Not so, O Lord, not so, I beseech Thee; rather with the prophet Samuel would I say humbly and earnestly, *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth*. Let not Moses or any one of the prophets speak to me, but do Thou rather speak to me, O Lord my God, the inspirer and enlightener of all Prophets; for Thou alone, without any aid from them, art able to teach me perfectly, but They without Thee profit nothing.

2. They can utter words, but they cannot give the Spirit. They speak pleasantly, and yet when Thou art silent they do not touch the heart. They convey the letter, but it is only Thou who canst open the sense. They preach mysteries, but Thou revealest their meaning. They give commands, but Thou givest help to perform them. They shew the way, but Thou givest strength to walk in it. They only knock at the door, but Thou teachest and enlightenest the heart. They water the ground, but Thou givest the increase. They make themselves heard by the ear, but Thou makest the sound intelligible.

3. Therefore let not Moses speak to me, but do Thou, O Lord my God, the Eternal Truth; lest, if I be only admonished from without and not quickened within, I die and bear no fruit. Let it not be brought in judgment against me that I have heard Thy word but have not obeyed it, have known but have not loved it, have be-

¹ 1 Sam. iii. 9.² Ps. cxix. 125.³ Ps. cxix. 36.⁴ Deut. xxxii. 2.⁵ Ex. xx. 19.

lieved but have not kept it. Speak then, *Lord, for Thy servant heareth*; and *Thou hast the words of eternal Life*¹. Speak to me for the comfort of my soul, and for the amendment of my whole life, and for Thine own praise and glory and everlasting honour!

CHAP. III. *THAT THE WORDS OF GOD ARE TO BE HEARD WITH HUMILITY, AND THAT MANY DO NOT ATTEND TO THEM.*

1. "MY son, hear My words, for they are sweet, and surpass all the wisdom of the wise of this world. *My words are spirit and life*², and not to be weighed in the balance of human understanding. They are not to be listened to for amusement's sake, but to be heard in silence, and to be received with all humility and love."

2. And I answered, *Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him in Thy Law, that thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity*³, and that he may be blessed in the earth.

3. "I," saith the Lord, "have taught My Prophets from the beginning, and to this present time I do not cease to speak to all men; but many are deaf to My voice and hardhearted. Many listen to the world more willingly than to God—more easily follow the desires of the flesh, than the commands of God. The world promises things temporal and trifling, and it is served with zeal; I promise things eternal and infinite, and the hearts of men are slow to move at My bidding. Who is there that serves and obeys Me in all things with the same earnestness, wherewith he serves the world and human masters? For a small reward men will run a long way; for life eternal they will scarce raise a foot from the ground. A trifling prize is striven for earnestly; for a single pound men will go to law; for mere vanity or for very small returns men rise up early and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness.

¹ S. John vi. 68. ² S. John vi. 63. ³ Ps. xciv. 12, 13.

4. "And yet, (shame upon mankind that it should be so!) for a crown incorruptible, and a treasure in the heavens which faileth not, and for eternal honour and glory, men are afraid of wearying themselves. Blush for shame, slothful servant, that others should run more actively to perdition, than you to life! that they should joy more in vanity, than you in the truth! And after all they are sometimes disappointed in their hopes; whereas My promise never fails, nor is any one who trusts in Me ever sent empty away. What I promise, that I perform: what I say, that I fulfil: provided only that they who seek Me are faithful, and continue in My love unto the end. Therefore I am the rewarder of those who diligently seek Me, and the support of those who live a holy life.

5. "Write My words in thy heart, and consider them carefully; for in time of trial they will be very needful to you. Things which you do not understand when you read them, you will know in the day of visitation. I visit My chosen ones both by trial and by consolation. And I read to them daily two lessons, to wit, to resist sin, and to follow after holiness. He who hears My words and despises them *hath one who will judge him in the last day*¹."

A PRAYER FOR THE GRACE OF DEVOTION.

6. O Lord my God, Thou art all my desire! And who am I that I should venture to address Thee? I am the lowest and most unworthy of Thy servants,—poorer and more unworthy than I dare think or confess. Nevertheless, remember me, O Lord, because I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing. Thou alone art good, just, and holy: Thou canst do all things, Thou givest all things, Thou fillest all things, leaving him only without Thy presence who loves the presence of sin. Remember Thy mercy and lovingkindness; and forasmuch as it is not Thy will that Thy creatures should be sent empty away, fill my heart, I beseech Thee, with Thy grace.

¹ S. John xii. 48.

7. How can I support this life, unless Thy mercy and grace comfort me? Turn not Thy face from me; delay not to visit my soul; take not away Thy consolation, lest *my soul gasp as a thirsty land. Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God*¹; teach me to walk before Thee in holiness and humility, for Thou art my wisdom; Thou knowest me and all my frailty; Thou knewest me before I was born into the world, yea before the world itself was made.

CHAP. IV. *THAT WE MUST WALK BEFORE
GOD IN TRUTH AND HUMILITY.*

1. "My Son, walk before Me in truth, and seek Me always with simplicity of heart. He who walks before Me in truth shall be safe from evil, and the truth shall make him free from the malice of the wicked. If the truth make you free, you shall be free indeed, and you will not be moved by the vain words of men."

2. O Lord, it is true, as Thou sayest; so, I pray Thee, let it be with me. Let Thy Truth teach me, let it guard and keep me safe to the end. Cause it to set me free from all evil and inordinate affection; and I will walk with Thee, when Thou hast set my heart at liberty.

3. "I will teach thee," saith the Truth, "what things are right and pleasing in My eyes. Think upon your sins with sorrow and contrition, and never value yourself upon your good works. You are in very truth a sinner, and liable to evil passions. In yourself you have no strength; you easily fall into sin, you are easily overcome by temptation, you are easily moved to anger, you are easily driven from good purposes. You have nothing wherein to glory, but many things whereof to feel humble, for you are weaker than you can well believe.

4. "Therefore let nothing that you do seem great in your eyes; nothing so precious, that you should set your heart upon it. Nothing is great, nothing really

¹ Ps. cxliii. 6. 10.

worthy of praise and desire, save that which is eternal. Let eternal Truth be your chief joy; your own unworthiness your chief sorrow. Fear nothing, abhor nothing, avoid nothing, so much as your own sins and vices, which ought to grieve you more than the loss of all earthly things. There are some who do not walk before Me in sincerity, who can discuss doctrines and argue concerning the deep things of God, but who do not give themselves to those things which concern their salvation. They who do thus are proud, knowing nothing, and often through their pride fall into sin.

5. "Fear the judgments of God, tremble at the wrath of the Omnipotent. Shrink from discussing the ways and works of God; rather think upon your own iniquities, in how many things you have offended, how many things you have left undone. Some persons expend their devotion chiefly upon forms and outward observances. Some have Me ever in their mouths, but very little in their hearts. But there are some also, who, having their minds enlightened and their affections purged, ever aspire to things eternal, have their hearts weaned from earthly things, use this world as not abusing it: and these perceive what the Spirit of truth speaks within them; because it teaches them to set their affections on things above, not upon things beneath, to see the folly of laying up treasure on earth where moth and rust corrupt, and the wisdom of laying up treasure in Heaven and meditating thereupon day and night."

CHAP. V. ON THE MARVELLOUS INFLUENCE OF DIVINE LOVE.

I. I BLESS Thee, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, for that Thou hast condescended to remember me, unworthy as I am. *O Father of mercies and God of all comfort*¹, I give Thee thanks, who dost refresh me though unworthy with the abundance of Thy

¹ 2 Cor. i. 3.

consolation. I will bless Thee with Thine only begotten Son and with the Holy Spirit, and glorify Thee evermore. Yea, Lord God, Lover of my soul, when Thou enterest into my heart all my reins rejoice. Thou art my glory and my joy; Thou my hope and refuge in the day of my trouble.

2. Yet forasmuch as I am still weak in love and imperfect in holiness, therefore I crave to be still strengthened and comforted by Thee. Visit me more frequently, and instruct me in Thy holy discipline. Deliver me from evil passions, and cure my heart of all inordinate affections, so that, being healed and purged within, I may become fit to love, strong to suffer, firm to persevere.

3. Great is the power of love; yea, it is an excellent gift; it alone makes every burden light, and the rough smooth. With it burdens are not burdensome, and the bitter becomes sweet and refreshing. The love of Christ impels to great things, and causes men to strive ever to go on unto perfection. Love springeth upwards, and cannot be held down to earth. Love coveteth to be free and unfettered by all worldly affections, lest these should interfere with the spiritual sight, or lest it should either be entangled by temporal prosperity or oppressed by adversity. There is nothing sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing deeper, nothing broader, nothing more pleasant, nothing better either in heaven or in earth; for love is born of God, nor can it find rest except in God.

4. He who loves is swift in God's commandments, runs, yea flies; he is free, there is nothing that can hold him. He is able to give all things, he himself possesseth all things, because he rests in the one supreme Good, from whom all good proceeds. He looks not to the gifts, but ever looks beyond them to the Giver. Love knows no measure; no band can restrain it. Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of any labour; its zeal is beyond its power; it never speaks of impossibility, because it holds all things to be possible. Therefore it can do all

things, and it has large success and carries out its purposes, while he who is devoid of love faints and fails.

5. Love is watchful, sleeping it watcheth, weary it yields not to fatigue, fettered it cannot be bound, fearful it is not terrified; but as a live flame, or a lighted torch, it breaks forth, and overcomes all attempts to quench it. The soul which loves God cries out with deep earnestness, "O my God, mine in the bands of everlasting love, Thou art wholly mine, I am wholly Thine!"

6. Fill me with love, that I may learn the sweetness of love in my inmost soul. Teach me to sing Thy praises, and make my heart jubilant with divine love. I would fain love Thee more than myself, and myself only for Thy sake, and all men in Thee, and those chiefly who chiefly love Thee.

7. Love is swift, true, pleasant, and holy; strong, patient, faithful, prudent, long suffering, manly, and unselfish: he who seeks himself is so far deficient in love. Love is circumspect, humble, upright; not fond of ease, not yielding to levity, not given to vanity; sober, chaste, steady, quiet, and watchful over all inlets of sense. Love is submissive and obedient to all to whom submission and obedience are due, humble in its own eyes, grateful and devoted to God, ever trusting and hoping in Him, even when God seems to hide His face; for love cannot always be free from sorrow.

8. He who is not prepared to suffer all things, and to conform himself in all things to the will of the Beloved, cannot truly be said to love God. He who loves must willingly endure things bitter and hard to bear for the Beloved's sake, and not allow himself to falter in his affection although all things should seem to be against him.

CHAP. VI. ON THE TEST OF TRUE LOVE.

1. "My Son, your love is not yet firm and discreet."
2. Why, Lord?
3. "Because you are easily discouraged in your efforts,

and are too anxious concerning sensible comfort. He, whose love is firm, is steady under trials, and is not deceived by the cunning deceits of the enemy. He rejoices in My dealings with him when in prosperity; he does not grieve at them when in adversity.

4. "He whose love is discreet considers not so much the gift, as the giver. Love is with him a deep affection of the soul, and all gifts are as nothing compared with the Beloved One Himself. He whose love towards Me is truly noble rests upon no gift, but upon Me above every gift.

5. "All is not lost, if at any time you be tempted to entertain thoughts concerning Me, which you feel to be unworthy thoughts. That good and holy affection which you sometimes feel is the result of present Grace and a foretaste of the heavenly country, upon which you must not lean too much, for it comes and goes. You must learn therefore to fight against unworthy thoughts, and to spurn them as the suggestion of the devil.

6. "Therefore also let not foolish fancies trouble you, come whence they may. Hold fast to what you know to be true and right in the sight of God. Do not be tempted to think yourself a hypocrite, because you find your mind sometimes rapt by holiest thoughts and then immediately after grovelling again upon earth. For in this you are more truly the sufferer, than the doer; and if evil thoughts pain you and you strive against them, they become rather a means of grace than an occasion of sin.

7. "Never forget that the old enemy is entirely bent upon hindering your progress in good, and marring all efforts after holiness; he would fain keep you from worship, and from thoughts of My Passion, from remembrance and confession of sin, from self-examination and watchfulness, from determination to excel in virtue and all good works. He insinuates evil thoughts into your mind, that he may weary and disgust you, that he may keep you from prayer and from the reading of Holy

Scripture. Humble confession of sin he abhors; if he can, he will keep you from Holy Communion. Do not believe him, nor heed him, though he spread his nets for you continually. Attribute the thoughts to him, when anything evil and impure enters your mind. Say to him, 'Avaunt, unclean spirit! unclean indeed, who whisperest such abominations in mine ear! Depart from me, vile deceiver! thou shalt have no part in me; the Lord is on my side, and therefore thou shalt be put to confusion! I would rather die and suffer all imaginable torments, than give heed to thee. Be silent, I will hear thee no longer, though thou preparest for me still greater conflicts. *The Lord is my salvation, whom then shall I fear? Though an host were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid. The Lord is my strength and my redeemer*¹.'

8. "Fight manfully as a good soldier; and if sometimes you give way through frailty, rise with renewed strength, trusting in My abundant grace; and beware of self-confidence and pride. It is because men forget this caution, that so many are led into error, and sometimes fall into incurable blindness. Let the ruin of the proud and self-confident be a warning to you, and a perpetual monitor of humility."

CHAP. VII. ON A HUMBLE ESTIMATE OF OUR GROWTH IN GRACE.

1. "MY Son, it is better and safer for you rather to conceal your sense of God's grace, than to allow yourself to be puffed up by it, or to speak much of it, or to dwell much upon it; you should rather endeavour to feel how unworthy of grace you are. High and excited feelings are easily changed into their very opposite. If you are blest at any time with a very lively sense of God's grace, think how poor and miserable you would be without that grace. True growth in holiness is not to be measured by the sense of consolation which you enjoy; the humility

¹ Ps. xxvii. 1. 3. xix. 14.

and patience with which you can bear the want of it is a much safer measure: for then it will be seen whether you become sluggish in prayer, and whether you slacken in the zeal with which you perform your duties, or whether on the other hand you do willingly, so far as in you lies, that which you know to be right and good, and suffer no anxiety of mind, which you may feel, to interfere with the plain dictates of conscience.

2. "For there are many, who as soon as things go ill with them straightway become impatient and slothful. *For the way of a man is not in himself*¹, but it belongs to God to give and to comfort, when He will, and as much as He will, and whom He will, as it pleaseth Him, and no otherwise. Some have lost themselves through forgetfulness of their dependence upon God, and because they have attempted more than they were able to perform, not remembering their own weakness, but following rather the impulse of their feelings than the guidance of their judgment. And because they have attempted to go beyond the will of God, therefore they have suffered a fall. They who had built for themselves a nest in heaven have thus been left poor and miserable, in order that by being humbled they might learn not to fly upon their own wings, but to put their trust in Mine. They who are untried and unskilled in the ways of the Lord may easily be deceived and led into error, unless they consult those who are more experienced than themselves.

3. "They who determine to follow their own opinion, rather than to give heed to those who are more experienced than themselves, will incur much danger from their obstinacy. They who are wise in their own eyes seldom submit to be ruled by others. It is better to have a little knowledge coupled with humility than the treasures of all the sciences accompanied by pride and self-complacency. It is safer for you to possess little, than to have much and to be puffed up by the possession of it.

¹ Jer. x. 23.

He does not act discreetly, who gives himself up wholly to joy, forgetting his former poverty, and that fear of the Lord which trembles at the thought of falling from grace once received. Nor is he to be accounted wise, who in time of adversity and trouble gives way to feelings of despair, and fails to put his sure trust in Me.

4. "He who is too confident in time of peace is apt to be cast down and timid when war comes. If you could learn to be humble and quiet, and to rule your own spirit, you would not so easily fall into danger and trouble. It is good advice for you, whenever you find your spirit full of fervour, to consider what you would do if the light should be withdrawn. And should this happen, consider that it may again return, and that it has been withdrawn for a time for your own benefit, and for My glory.

5. "Such probation is often better for you, than if everything prospered according to your own heart's wish. For a man's true excellence is not to be judged by the number of visions vouchsafed to him, or the comfort which he enjoys, nor even by his skill in Holy Scripture and his apparent knowledge of divine things; but rather from this, if he be established in humility, and full of divine charity; if he seek ever the honour of God with a single eye and a pure heart; if he think nothing of himself and be unfeignedly ashamed of his shortcomings, and seek not honour from men but from God who tries the heart."

CHAP. VIII. *ON LOWLY THOUGHTS OF OURSELVES IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.*

1. *I will speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes*¹. If I think more highly of myself, behold Thou standest against me, and my iniquities declare Thy testimony to be true, and I cannot contradict it. But if I confess my vileness and poverty, and give up all high

¹ Gen. xviii. 27.

thoughts of myself, Thy grace will be granted to me, and Thy Light will shine into my heart; and all pride will be lost in the depths of my nothingness, and will perish for evermore. Then wilt Thou make me to see myself, what I am, what I have been, and to what condition I have come: for in truth I am *foolish and ignorant*¹. Left to myself I am nothing, and full of infirmity; but if Thou lookest upon me, I at once become strong, and am filled with joy. And most wonderful it is, that I, who am ever drawn downwards by my own weight, am so quickly raised up when the arms of Thy mercy embrace me.

2. Thy love doeth this; it comes to me freely, it succours me in my many necessities, it guards me from grievous perils, and saves me (as I well know) from numberless evils. In loving myself I have lost myself; in seeking Thee alone, and loving Thee with a pure heart, I have found Thee and have found myself too, and the more truly I have loved the more deeply have I been humbled; for Thou, O most merciful, dealest with me beyond my deserts, and above all that I dare to ask or hope.

3. Blessed be Thou, my God, because, notwithstanding my extreme unworthiness, Thy bounty and infinite goodness never cease to be kind to the unthankful and the ignorant. Convert our hearts to Thee, that we may be thankful, humble, devout; for Thou art our salvation, the strength of our life, and a strong tower for us against all adversaries.

CHAP. IX. *THAT ALL THINGS ARE TO BE REFERRED TO GOD AS AN ULTIMATE END.*

1. "MY Son, if you desire to be truly blessed, I must be your supreme and ultimate end. To think of Me thus will purify your affections, which are so often wrongly bent towards yourself and towards the creature. For if

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 21.

in anything you be self-seeking, immediately you become weak and unprofitable. All things should be referred to Me, because it is I who am the giver of all things. Everything should be regarded as coming from the Source of all good; and therefore all good things should be referred to Me as their true and only origin.

2. "From Me the small and the great, the poor and the rich, draw water as from a living fountain, and they who serve Me freely and fully shall receive grace for grace. He who will glory in himself, or pique himself upon any good thing as proceeding from himself, shall not have true joy, nor shall have his heart at liberty, but shall in divers ways be troubled and hindered. Therefore ascribe to yourself no good thing, and attribute to no man the power of holiness, but give all the praise to God, without whom man possesses nothing. I have given all, I wish to receive all, and for all gifts I strictly require a return of thanks.

3. "This is the truth, which is the refuge from all vain boasting. And if heavenly grace and true charity take possession of the heart, there will be no room for envy or narrowness of mind, and self-love will be banished. For divine charity conquers all things, and expands all the powers of the soul. If you be truly wise, you will rejoice in Me alone; in Me alone will you hope; for *none is good, save God only*¹, who is above all things to be praised, and in all things to be blessed."

CHAP. X. ON THE HAPPINESS OF SERVING GOD.

1. I WILL speak unto Thee again, O Lord, and will not hold my peace; I will utter my words in the ears of Him, who is my God, my Lord, and my King, and who inhabiteth eternity. *O how plentiful is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee*²! But what art Thou to them that love Thee! what to them

¹ S. Luke xviii. 19.

² Ps. xxxi. 21.

that serve Thee with all their heart! Great is the blessedness of that vision, which Thou dost vouchsafe to those that love Thee. In this chiefly hast Thou shewn Thy loving-kindness, that when I was nothing Thou createdst me, and when I wandered from Thee Thou broughtest me back again to serve Thee, and didst command me to love Thee.

2. O fount of love unceasing, what shall I say concerning Thee? How can I forget Thee, who hast condescended to remember me, even when I was lost? Thou hast been merciful to Thy servant beyond all my hopes, and hast shewn favour and loving-kindness far beyond all my deserts. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me?* Is it too much that I should serve Thee, whom every creature is bound to serve? It ought not to seem too much; this rather should seem a great and wonderful thing, that Thou shouldest deign to receive a servant so poor and so unworthy, and to admit him into Thine own family.

3. Behold all things which I have are Thine, and of Thine own alone can I give Thee. Yet in truth Thou givest me more service than I Thee. Lo, the heaven and the earth have been created by Thee for the service of man, and to this day they do all that Thou hast commanded them. And even this is but a small thing; for Thou hast created the Angels also to minister to man. But this transcends all, that Thou hast Thyself deigned to minister to man, and hast promised to give even Thyself to him.

4. What shall I render unto Thee for all these benefits? O that I could serve Thee all the days of my life! O that for one day only I could serve Thee wholly as I ought! Truly Thou art worthy of all service, of all honour, yea, of eternal praise. Truly Thou art my Lord, and I am Thy poor servant, who am bound to serve Thee with body, soul, and strength, and who ought never to weary in singing Thy praise. This is my desire, this is

my purpose; whatever is lacking do Thou be pleased to supply.

5. Great is the honour, great the glory of serving Thee and holding all else as nothing in comparison of Thee. Thou wilt give Thy grace abundantly to those, who from their hearts submit themselves to Thy most holy service. They will experience the sweet comfort of Thy Holy Spirit, who for love of Thee have mortified all unworthy loves. They will walk at liberty, who for Thy Name's sake have entered upon the narrow way and have shunned the broad road of worldliness.

6. O happy and delightful service, by which a man becomes truly free! O blessed condition of obedience, which makes men like angels, pleasing to God, a terror to Satan, a praise and joy to all faithful souls! O how gladly and thankfully should such service be embraced, the end of which is peace unspeakable and joy at God's right hand for evermore!

CHAP. XI. *THAT THE DESIRES OF THE
HEART MUST BE EXAMINED AND CON-
TROLLED.*

1. "MY Son, there are still many things for you to learn, which hitherto you have not learned sufficiently."

2. What are they, Lord?

3. "Your own wishes must be regulated entirely according to My good pleasure, and you must not seek yourself, but ever seek earnestly to do My will. Your own wishes excite you and are the spring of your actions; yet consider with yourself which ought to move you the more, My honour, or your own advantage. If I be the end of your actions, you will be satisfied, however I may ordain their consequences; but if there be in them anything of self-seeking, this will surely oppress and grieve you.

4. "Beware therefore of dwelling too much upon your *own preconceived* schemes, and so forgetting Me; lest

you should have sorrow afterwards, and that which you set your heart upon should cause you grief. For a desire may seem good, and yet it may not be right at once to indulge it; and a desire may seem at first sight to be the contrary, and yet may not be so in reality. It is well therefore sometimes to put a curb even upon good desires and intentions, lest your mind should be distracted and overstrained, lest you should by want of self-discipline put a stumblingblock in the way of others, or even lest the opposition of others should trouble you and cause you to fall.

5. "Sometimes also it is necessary to take stronger measures, and manfully to contend against the sensual appetite, not to consider what will please the flesh or otherwise, but rather to make this your great effort that the flesh be subdued to the spirit. And the body must be kept under and had in subjection, until it has learned to suffer and endure and to be content with little, and to be pleased with simple comforts, and not to murmur if it please God to afflict."

CHAP. XII. *ON THE GROWTH OF PATIENCE
IN THE SOUL, AND ON CONFLICT
AGAINST LUSTS.*

1. O LORD my God, I see that patience is very necessary for me; for there are many things in life which happen contrary to our hopes. And however much I may strive for peace, I perceive that my life cannot be free from conflict and sorrow.

2.* "It is so, My Son. For it is My will that you should not seek such peace as is free from trial and from crosses; but you may consider that you will have found peace, when you have been exercised by divers tribulations, and proved by many disappointments. *The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light*¹: they think little of trouble, if only it

¹ S. Luke xvi. 8.

helps them on towards the purpose which they have in view: and why then should those trials seem hard to endure, which fit men for the inheritance of the saints in light?

3. "But, you may say, they, who follow this world with their whole heart, have abundance of pleasure such as they desire, and therefore all trouble seems slight by comparison.

4. "Well, be it so; grant that they who follow this world have abundance of pleasure; but how long does it last? They who are the children of this world only must soon pass away, like smoke, and their memorial will perish with them. Moreover, even while they live, their joys are not free from bitterness nor their lives from weariness and anxiety. For the very things which give pleasure are often also the sources of pain. Following pleasures without restraint, they experience a righteous retribution in sadness of heart. O how short-lived, how deceitful, how unsatisfying, how unworthy all these pleasures are! They who pursue them are blind; like dumb animals they seek only the gratifications which belong to this mortal life, and they forget the eternal death of their spirits. Therefore, My Son, *go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thy appetites*¹. *Delight thou in the Lord, and He shall give thee thine heart's desire*².

5. "For indeed if you wish to enjoy true pleasure, and to receive abundant consolation from Me, you must look above all earthly things and consider that your true blessedness consists in knowing and loving Me. And the more you are able to withdraw your heart from the consolations of this world, so much the more sweet and effectual will you find those consolations which come from Me. But you will not arrive at this condition of mind without some sorrow and conflict. Old habits will stand in your way, which must be replaced by better habits. The flesh will murmur, but the fervour of the spirit must

¹ Eccclus. xviii. 30.

² Ps. xxxvii. 4.

repress its murmurings. The old serpent will tempt and irritate you, but he must be subdued by prayer; nor must you despise the help which you will find in doing your duty in the station of life to which you are called."

CHAP. XIII. ON HUMBLE OBEDIENCE
AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. "MY Son, he who strives to withdraw himself from obedience, does thereby withdraw himself from grace and he who seeks for himself a happiness of his own devising, loses those blessings which are the common lot of all God's faithful people. He who does not freely and gladly submit himself to the will of God, shews thereby that his own carnal will has not yet been sufficiently subdued. Learn therefore to submit to God, and to all who in His providence may be set over you; for external enemies are more easily vanquished, when there is no rebellion within the camp. Your soul has no worse or more dangerous enemy than yourself, if your flesh be not subdued to the spirit. You must banish self-will, if you would prevail against flesh and blood. It is inordinate self-love, which hinders men from resigning themselves to the guidance of a higher will.

2.* "Is it a great matter that you should be called upon to renounce your own will, when I Myself came into the world *not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me?* I made Myself the lowest and last of all, that through My humility you might conquer pride. Remember that you are dust. Learn to be humble as becomes him who is dust and must return to dust. Learn to subdue your own will, and do not shrink from being last of all and servant of all.

3.* "Be zealous against yourself, and kill all pride and selfishness within you, that men may glorify God in witnessing the fruits of your humility. Even if you be despised in this world, why should you complain? If you be reproached for My sake, why should you deem you

self unhappy? Have you not often offended God? Yet My eye has spared you, because your soul was precious in My sight, that you might know My love, and might live to shew your gratitude for all My benefits; and how should you do this, but by practising true humility and obedience, and, if need be, bearing reproach patiently?"

CHAP. XIV. *ON CONSIDERING THE SECRET
JUDGMENTS OF GOD, THAT SO WE BE
NOT PUFFED UP BY THE THOUGHT OF
OUR GOOD DEEDS.*

1. JUST and terrible are thy judgments, O Lord; my bones quake, and my soul is terrified exceedingly. I am dumb before Thee, and remember that *the heavens are not clean in Thy sight*. If *Thou chargest the angels with folly*¹, and hast not spared them when they rebelled, what shall be done to me? If the stars have been permitted to fall from heaven, surely it becomes me who am but dust and ashes to be humble. I have seen those whose deeds appeared fair fall down to the lowest depths of shame, and some who have eaten angels' food afterwards filling themselves with the husks of swine.

2. There is no holiness, O Lord, if Thou withdraw Thine hand. Wisdom profits not, unless Thou direct it. Strength is but weakness, unless Thou preserve it. Chastity is not secure, unless Thou keep guard over it. Watchfulness is not sufficient, unless Thou watch with us. Left to ourselves, we sink and perish; when Thou visitest us, we rise up and live. We are weak in ourselves, but strong in Thee; we are cold, but Thou warmest us with the warmth of life.

3. O how humbly ought I to think of myself, if there should seem to be any good thing in me! With what reverence ought I to bow to Thy judgments, which are a great deep, when I find in myself nothing, and less than nothing! O immeasurable weight, O trackless and

¹ Job xv. 15, and iv. 18.

unfathomable ocean, in which I feel myself lost ! Where is boasting ? where is self-confidence ? Truly all boasting and vain glory are swallowed up in the thought of the deep abyss of Thy judgments.

4. What is all flesh in Thy sight ? *Shall the work say of Him that made it, He made me not*¹ ? How can he give way to boasting thoughts, whose heart is truly subdued to God ? The whole world will not puff him up, whom the Truth has subdued ; nor will the mouth of all flatterers move him, who has placed his whole hope in God. For the speakers of vain things are themselves vanity ; they will perish as the sound of their own words : but *the truth of the Lord endureth for ever*².

CHAP. XV. *HOW WE OUGHT TO COMPORT OURSELVES WITH REGARD TO ALL THINGS WHICH OUR HEARTS DESIRE.*

1. "MY Son, the language of your heart should in all matters be such as this : 'Lord, if it be Thy will, let this be done. Lord, if it be to Thy honour, let this be done in Thy Name. Lord, if Thou seest it to be to my profit, and if Thou dost approve, then grant me grace to use this to Thine honour. But if thou knowest that it will be to my hurt, and not to the profit of my soul, take from me this desire.' For desires do not all come from the Holy Spirit, although they may seem right and good in a man's own eyes. It is difficult to judge truly, whether it be the good Spirit or another spirit which impels you to desire this or that, or whether you be moved entirely by your own. Many are deceived in the end, who seemed at first to be under the leading of the good Spirit.

2. "Therefore whatever your heart desires must be sought after in humility and in the fear of God, and all must be committed to Me with full resignation of mind, while you say : 'Lord, Thou knowest what is best ; let this or that be done, as seemeth best to Thee. Give what

¹ Is. xxix. 16.

² Ps. cxvii. 2.

Thou wilt, and as much as Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Do with me as Thou knowest to be good for me, and as pleaseth Thee, and conduceth most to Thine honour. Place me where Thou wilt, and let Thy Spirit guide me in all things. I am in Thine hand; I the clay, Thou the potter. Behold, I am Thy servant, ready to do all Thy will; I desire to live to Thee, not to myself. O that I could do so worthily and fully!"

*A PRAYER FOR GRACE TO BE ENABLED
TO DO GOD'S WILL.*

3. BLESSED Jesus, grant me Thy grace, that it may be with me, and work with me, and continue with me even to the end. Give me strength to desire always that which is acceptable to Thee. Let Thy will be mine, and let my will ever wait upon and be in accordance with Thine. Let it be the purpose of my heart to will or not to will as pleaseth Thee; yea, let me abhor the thought of willing or not willing otherwise than as Thou wilt.

4. Grant that being dead to the world I may live to Thee, and may take it patiently if I be lightly esteemed of men. Grant me to rest in Thee above all things, and to enjoy in Thee that peace which the world cannot give. Thou art the true peace of my heart, Thou its only rest: out of Thee all is trouble. In Thee alone the One great Eternal Good, *I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest*¹. Amen.

*CHAP. XVI. THAT TRUE COMFORT IS TO
BE SOUGHT IN GOD ALONE.*

1. TRUE lasting comfort is not to be expected here, but hereafter; for if I had all the comfort which this world can give and might enjoy all its delights, it is certain that they could not endure long. Therefore, O my soul, thou canst find full satisfaction and perfect rest in God ~~alone~~, who is the comforter of the poor and the

¹ Ps. iv. 8.

supporter of the humble. Wait a little while, O my soul, wait for that which God promises, and thou wilt have abundance of all good things in heaven. If thou desirest present things, thou wilt lose things heavenly and eternal. Use things temporal, (but desire things eternal.) Thou canst not be satisfied with any temporal good, because for this wast thou not created.

2. Though thou shouldst possess all created things, thou couldst not be happy in them: in God, who created them, in Him alone thy happiness consists: in God, not as He is seen by the foolish lovers of this world, but as He will be seen by the faithful followers of Christ, and as He is even now known in part by the spiritual and pure in heart, whose *conversation is in heaven*¹. All human comfort is short-lived and vain; that only is blessed and true, which springs from the truth within. The holy and devout man carries with him his true comfort everywhere, that is, Jesus in his heart; and he says to Him, "Be with me, Lord Jesus, in every place and in every time. Let this be my consolation, that I can be happy without such solace as this world can give. And if it please Thee to withdraw Thine own consolation, let me find abundant solace even then in doing Thy will and submitting to the trial. For *Thou wilt not alway be chiding; neither keepest Thou Thine anger for ever*²."

CHAP. XVII. THAT WE MUST CAST ALL OUR CARE UPON GOD.

1. "MY Son, suffer Me to deal with thee according to My will; I know what is best for you. You think as a man; in many things your judgment is warped by earthly considerations."

2. O Lord, Thou speakest that which I feel to be true. Thy care for me is greater than any that I can exercise for myself. He has no firm foundation for his feet, who does not cast all his care upon Thee. Lord, if only my

¹ Phil. iii. 20.

² Ps. ciii. 9.

will remain firm and fixed in Thee, do with me whatsoever pleaseth Thee. Whatsoever Thou doest can only be good. If it be Thy will that I walk in darkness, blessed be Thy Name! and if it be Thy will that I rejoice in the light, blessed be Thy Name still! Blessed be Thou, if Thou art pleased to comfort me; and equally blessed be Thou, if Thou seest fit to chasten.

3. "My Son, this must be your condition of mind, if you would walk with Me. You must be as ready to suffer, as to rejoice. You must as willingly be poor and needy, as rich and full."

4. Lord, I will willingly suffer for Thy sake whatsoever Thou desirest to put upon Me. I am willing to receive from Thine hand good and evil, sweet and bitter, joy and sorrow, and to give thanks for all that may come upon me. Keep me from all sin, and then I will fear neither death nor hell. If Thou cast me not from Thy presence for ever, and blot me not out of the book of life, the troubles of this world may very well be borne.

CHAP. XVIII. *THAT THE TROUBLES OF THIS
WORLD ARE TO BE BORNE PATIENTLY
AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.*

1. "MY Son, I came down from heaven for your salvation; I bore your sorrows, not by necessity, but through love, that you also might learn patience, and might bear sorrows without repining. From the hour of My birth to the moment of My death upon the Cross I was never free from grief. I was poor in this world's goods. I heard many unkind and cruel things said concerning Me. I submitted without a murmur to many reproaches; for kindness I received ingratitude, for miracles blasphemy, for teaching rebuke."

2. Lord, forasmuch as Thou wast patient in Thy life, therein fulfilling the will of Thy Father, it is right that I (poor sinner that I am) should be patient according to *Thy will*, and strive to turn to my salvation all the trou-

bles of this present life. For though there be much in this life which is burdensome, yet Thy example has made all burdens easy to bear, and the path of life has been sanctified by Thy footsteps, and through Thee the weak are made strong; and the gate of heaven stands wide open, since Thou didst open it; and the way to heaven, though narrow, has been made plain and easy, since Thou didst condescend to point it out Thyself.

3. O what thanks am I bound to give Thee, for that Thou hast deigned to shew to me and to all faithful souls the true road to Thy eternal kingdom! For Thy life is our light; and through Thy holy patience we press on towards Thee, who art our crown. Unless Thou hadst gone before us, and taught us, who would have attempted to follow? Ah, how many would go back, were it not for the light of Thy blessed example! With all Thy signs and teaching we are but lukewarm in our zeal; what would have become of us, if we had not had Thee as a great light to guide us?

CHAP. XIX. ON BEARING INJURIES, AND THE TRUE TRIAL OF PATIENCE.

1. "WHAT do you say, My Son? Think of My passion and cease complaining. *You have not yet resisted unto blood*¹. What you suffer is little in comparison with others of your brethren, who have been *stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, destitute, afflicted, tormented*². It is well for you to call to mind the more grievous troubles of others, so that you may bear your own the more easily. And if your own do not seem less than those of others, take care that this be not the result of your own impatience. But whether they be small or great, study to bear them all patiently.

2. "The more patiently you dispose yourself to suffer, so much the more wisely do you act, and so much greater a reward will you receive: things will be easier to bear,

¹ Heb. xii. 4.

² Heb. xi. 37.

when your mind is thoroughly made up to bear them. And do not say: 'I cannot bear this or that from such a man; for he has injured me cruelly, and lays to my charge things which I knew not: but from another I will suffer willingly, and as I know that it is my duty to do.' Such a thought is not wise; it puts out of sight the real ground of patience, and Him who will give patience the crown; it dwells too much upon persons, and upon offences offered by one man to another.

3. "He is not truly patient, who is prepared to suffer only as much as seems good to himself, and only from those whom he himself chooses. He is really patient under suffering, who bears equally from those above him and those below, equally from the good and the bad, who considers that whatever trouble comes to him is sent by God and must therefore be gladly and even thankfully borne; he knows that God will be no man's debtor, and that whatever is borne for His sake will in no wise lose its reward.

4. "Be well girt for the fight therefore, if you wish to gain the victory. Without a struggle you cannot receive the crown. If you will not suffer, you thereby refuse to be crowned. But if you desire to be crowned, fight manfully, endure patiently. Without labour you cannot have rest, and without a battle there is no victory."

5. Enable me, O Lord, by Thy grace to do that which seems by nature impossible. Thou knowest that I can bear but little, and that I am soon cast down by the thought of adversity. Grant me grace to think it pleasant to suffer tribulation for Thy Name's sake, and to perceive that to suffer for Thee is very wholesome for my soul.

CHAP. XX. *ON THE CONFESSION OF OUR OWN INFIRMITIES, AND ON THE MISERIES OF THIS PRESENT LIFE.*

1. *I will acknowledge my sin unto Thee*¹; unto Thee, O Lord, will I confess my infirmities. It is often a small

¹ Ps. xxxii. 5.

thing that dejects and saddens me. I determine to act with courage, but when even a slight trial comes upon me, I find myself in a great strait. Sometimes a very trifling matter is the ground of a severe temptation; and while I deem myself safe, and when I least expect it, I sometimes find myself overthrown almost by a breath.

2. Consider therefore, O Lord, my low estate, and my frailty which Thou knowest. Pity me, and *take me out of the mire, that I sink not*¹, and that I be not cast down for evermore. This it is which vexes me and confounds me in Thy presence, that I am so infirm of purpose and ready to give way to my passions. Even though I consent not to them, still the temptations which arise from them are very painful to me, and it wearies me to live in continual strife. By this my weakness is brought home to me, in that abominable imaginations ever find their way into my mind much more easily than they leave my mind again.

3. O most mighty God of Israel, the strength of faithful souls, look, I pray Thee, upon the labour and sorrow of Thy servant, and assist him in all things which he puts his hand unto. Gird me with heavenly strength, that the old man, the flesh not yet fully subdued to the spirit, may not be able to prevail—that flesh, against which I must fight manfully as long as I remain in this present world. O what a life is this, so full of tribulation and trouble, so full of traps and foes! For when one trial or tribulation has gone, another comes; and before one conflict is well over, many others and those unexpected are found to be at hand.

4. How can we love a life which has so many sources of bitterness, which is subject to so many calamities and miseries? How can it even be called life, being so full of disease and death? And yet it is loved, and many delight in it. The world is often blamed, because it is deceitful and vain; and yet it is not easily relinquished,

¹ Ps. lxi. 15.

because the lusts of the flesh are too strong. But some things lead us to love it, and others to despise it. *The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*¹ lead us to the love of the world; but the pangs and pains which follow beget weariness and disgust.

5. Yet—alas that it should be so!—the love of pleasure overcomes the mind which is given up to the world, because it has neither seen nor tasted the inward delight of virtue and the happiness of knowing God. But they who have been able to set the world at its true value, and to live habitually in the fear of God, enjoy a peace which the world cannot give, and are able to see clearly the emptiness of its gifts and the deceitfulness of its promises.

CHAP. XXI. *THAT WE MUST REST UPON GOD HIMSELF, AND NOT UPON THOSE THINGS WHICH HE MAY SEE FIT TO GIVE US.*

1. ABOVE all things and under all circumstances, rest, O my soul, upon the Lord, for He is the eternal rest of His saints. Give me grace, O Lord Jesus Christ, to rest upon Thee beyond all created things, beyond all that is fair and pleasant, beyond all glory and honour, beyond all power and dignity, beyond all cleverness and knowledge, beyond all arts and virtues, beyond all joy and delight, beyond all fame and praise, beyond all sweetness and comfort, beyond all hope and promises, beyond all desert and desire, beyond all gifts and graces which Thou canst give and infuse, beyond all joy and gladness which the mind can receive and feel; lastly, beyond all angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, beyond all things visible and invisible, and beyond all that is not Thyself, O my God.

2. For Thou, O Lord my God, art above all supremely good; Thou alone art the most Highest, Thou alone the most Powerful, Thou alone complete in all fulness, Thou

¹ 1 Joh. ii. 16.

alone most gentle and kind, Thou alone fair in the perfection of beauty, Thou alone most noble and most glorious above all things, in whom all that is good and perfect was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. And therefore whatsoever Thou givest which is not Thyself is unsatisfying, whatsoever Thou dost reveal or promise leaves more to be revealed, so long as Thou Thyself art not seen and fully possessed; wherefore my heart cannot truly rest and be entirely satisfied, unless it rise beyond all gifts and creatures of Thine and rest in Thyself alone.

3. O Lord Jesus Christ, beloved husband of my soul, and lord of all creation, who will give me wings of true liberty to fly to Thee and be at rest? When will it be granted to me to see all Thy sweetness, O Lord my God? When shall I be so fully united to Thee, that all selfish feelings shall be swallowed up in Thy love, and my mind be filled with Thee in a way which the world knoweth not? As it is, I frequently have cause to groan, and to sorrow over my miseries; for many troubles come upon me in this dark valley, which overcloud to disturb and sadden me, often hinder and distract me, entice and entangle me, prevent my free access to Thee and full enjoyment of being in Thy presence. O let my sighs and sadness come before Thee!

4. O Jesus, Brightness of the eternal glory, consolation of pilgrim souls, before Thee my mouth is without utterance, and my silence must speak. How long, O Lord, how long? Let my Lord come to His poor servant, and make me joyful. Let Him put forth His hand, and deliver me from all adversity. Come, O come: for without Thee no day or hour can be joyful, since Thou art my joy, and without Thee my home is cheerless. I am miserable, and as one set fast in prison and in fetters, until Thou refresh me with the Light of Thy presence, and set me at liberty, and make Thy countenance favourable towards me.

5. Let others seek whatsoever they will instead of Thee: for me, nothing delights me, nor ever shall, save Thee, O my God, my hope, my eternal salvation! I will not hold my peace, nor will I cease to pray, until Thy grace returns, and Thou speakest to my heart.

6. "Lo, I am with you always. I come, for thou hast called upon Me. I have seen thy tears, I have heard thy prayers, thy humility and contrition of thy heart have caused Me to incline My ear."

7. And I said: Lord, I have called upon Thee, and have desired to enjoy Thy presence, and have prepared myself to give up all for Thee. For Thou didst first move me that I should seek after Thee. Blessed be Thou therefore, O Lord, who hast performed this goodness toward Thy servant according to the multitude of Thy mercies. What can Thy servant say in Thy presence more than this, that he desires to humble himself before Thee, being ever mindful of his own iniquity and vileness? For there is none like unto Thee, O God; there is none that can do the miracles which Thou doest. Thy works are very good, Thy judgments are true, and all things are governed by Thy providence. Praise therefore and glory be unto Thee, O wisdom of the Father: let my mouth, my soul, and all created things, bless and praise Thee, O Lord!

CHAP. XXII. *ON BEARING IN MIND THE MANIFOLD MERCIES OF GOD.*

1. OPEN my heart, O Lord, to Thy Law, and teach me to walk in Thy commandments. Grant me to understand Thy will, and with all reverence and diligent study to remember all Thy mercies, that so I may be able worthily to give Thee thanks. I know indeed and confess that I am not able to render to Thee the due tribute of praise for the least of all Thy benefits. I am less than the least of all Thy mercies; and when I think of Thy bounty, my *spirit faints from a sense of its surpassing greatness.*

2. All things which belong either to our souls or bodies, all things without us and within us, all things natural or supernatural, are Thy gift, and declare Thy mercy and loving-kindness from whom all good things do come. One man receives more, and another less, yet all is from Thee, and without Thee the least blessing is impossible. He who has received more cannot glory in his own merits, nor boast himself over others, nor look down upon him who has received less; for indeed he is the greater and better man who ascribes least to himself, and who is the most humble and devout in giving thanks; and he who thinks himself viler than all, and accounts himself more unworthy than his brethren, is the fitter to receive greater blessings from God.

3. On the other hand, he who has received less ought not therefore to be sad, nor to take it impatiently, nor to envy those who have received more than himself; rather should he wait upon Thee, O Lord, and praise Thy goodness, because Thou givest freely and liberally without respect of persons. All things are from Thee; therefore Thou oughtest in all things to be praised; Thou knowest what is best for every one; and why this man receives less and that more it is not for us to determine, but for Thee to whom the secrets of all men are known.

4. Wherefore, O Lord my God, I count it ever as a great blessing not to have many of those things which confer glory and distinction in the sight of men. A man who considers his poverty ought not to be dejected and sad, but rather to receive consolation from the thought; for Thou, O God, hast chosen the humble and poor, and those whom the world despises, to be Thy friends and servants; such were Thy apostles, whom Thou hast *made princes in all lands*¹. Yet they lived in the world without complaint, in much humility and simplicity, without malice or deceit, so that they even *rejoiced to suffer shame*

¹ Ps. xlv. 16.

for *Thy Name*¹, and those things which the world abhors they delighted in and loved.

5. He therefore who loves Thee and is sensible of Thy mercies ought to rejoice in nothing so much as in the thought, that Thy good will and pleasure are being fulfilled in him. And this thought should so comfort and console him, that he should as gladly be the least of all as others rejoice to be greatest, and should be as contented and happy in the lowest place as in the highest, and should as willingly be despised and scorned by others as be more honourable and greater in the world than they. For Thy will and the love of Thy honour ought to take precedence of all other things, and to comfort him more and please him better than all benefits which he either has received or ever can receive.

CHAP. XXIII. *CONCERNING FOUR THINGS
WHICH TEND GREATLY TO PEACE.*

1. "My Son, I will now teach you the way of peace and true liberty."

2. Do as Thou sayest, Lord, for it rejoices me to hear Thy voice.

3. "Study, my Son, rather to do the will of others than thine own. Desire always to have little rather than much. Choose the lower place, and yield the higher to others. Ever wish and pray that the will of God may be wholly done in you. The man who acts thus has found out the secret of peace and rest."

4. Lord, these few words of Thine contain true wisdom. They are soon spoken, but they are full of meaning, and abundant in fruit. If I could thoroughly attend to them, I should not be so easily troubled as I am. For indeed as often as I perceive myself to be disturbed and cast down, I find that I have failed to follow this teaching. But do Thou, who canst do all things, and who desirest the well-being of human souls, give me more grace,

¹ Acts v. 41.

that I may be able to fulfil all that Thou hast said, and to work out my own salvation.

A PRAYER AGAINST EVIL THOUGHTS.

5. *O Lord my God, go not far from me; my God, haste Thee to help me*¹: for many thoughts have risen up within me, and great terrors, which have afflicted my soul. How shall I escape from them unhurt? how shall I break through them?

6. *"I will go before thee,"* saith the Lord, *"and make the crooked places straight"*². I will open the gates of thy prison, and reveal to thee secret things."

7. Do, Lord, as Thou hast said: and let all evil thoughts flee away from before Thy face. This is my hope and my only consolation, to flee to Thee in every trouble, to trust in Thee, to call upon Thee from my inmost heart, and from Thee to wait patiently for consolation.

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION. W. H. W. 516

8. Enlighten me, O Lord Jesus, with the brightness of Thine inner light, and expel all darkness from the secret places of my heart. Restrain my wanderings, and deliver me from the power of temptations. Fight for me, and save me from the wild beasts, I mean from hurtful lusts; that peace may be established within me by Thy power, and that the abundance of Thy praise may resound in Thy holy Temple, that is, in a pure conscience. Command the wind and the storm; say to the sea, *Peace, be still*; say to the wind, *Blow not*; and so shall there be *a great calm*.

9. *Send out Thy light and Thy truth*³, that they may give light upon the earth; for I am but as the earth, dark and void, until Thou enlightenest me. Pour out Thy grace from above; soften my heart with the dew of Heaven; send streams of devotion to water the face of the earth, that it may bring forth good fruit. Raise my mind which is oppressed with a sense of sin, and enable me to

¹ Ps. lxxi. 10.

² Isai. xlv. 2.

³ Ps. xliii. 3.

hopeful, that, when inward consolation is taken from you, you can prepare your heart to bear even heavier things still, and can refrain from justifying yourself, as if you ought not to have suffered so much, but rather justify Me in all My dealings and praise Me in My holiness; then you are walking in the true and straight road of peace, and you may have a firm hope that you will see My face again in glory. And know that when you arrive at a full sense of your own unworthiness, then you will enjoy as much as is possible for you an abundance of peace."

CHAP. XXVI. *ON THE EXCELLENCE OF
THAT FREEDOM OF MIND WHICH IS
GAINED RATHER BY HUMBLE PRAYER
THAN BY FREQUENT READING.*

1. LORD, it is the work of the perfect man never to allow his mind to lose its hold upon heavenly things, and so to pass through many cares as though without care; not because he is slothful and indifferent, but because as being made free by Thee he has received the privilege of being loosened from all inordinate love of the creature.

2. I beseech Thee, O most holy Lord God, preserve me from the cares of this life, that I be not entangled by them; from many bodily necessities, that I be not entrapped by pleasure; from all spiritual impediments, that I be not wearied and cast down. I do not speak of those things, which worldly vanity seeks with all its might; but rather of those miseries, which overwhelm the soul of thy servant, and hinder it from walking as often as it would desire in freedom of spirit.

3. O my God, source of all that is sweet to my soul, change all carnal consolation into bitterness, if it draw me away from the love of things eternal and entice me by the too tempting offers of present delights. Let not flesh and blood prevail over me, O my God; let not the world and its short-lived glory deceive me; let not the devil and *his subtilty overthrow me.* Give me strength to resist,

patience to endure, constancy to persevere. Give me, instead of all consolations of this world, the blessed union of Thy Spirit; and instead of love of worldly things, pour into my heart the love of Thy Name.

4. Food, clothing, and all that tends to the comfort of the body, may easily become a hindrance to the soul. Grant me grace so to use such things as not to be entangled by the love of them. They cannot be wholly renounced, for nature requires support; but Thy holy law forbids me to set my heart upon them, that so my flesh may not triumph over my spirit. Let Thy hand, I beseech Thee, govern and teach me; that I be not led astray by too great an abundance of the things of this world.

**CHAP. XXVII. THAT THE LOVE OF SELF
KEEPS US BACK FROM THE HIGHEST GOOD.**

1. "My Son, you must give yourself up wholly, and keep back nothing. Love of self is more injurious to you than any earthly thing. Each thing has more or less hold upon you, according to the love and affection which you bear to it. If your love be pure, simple, and well ordered, you will be free from slavery to the world. Do not covet that which you have no right to possess; do not possess that which may be a hindrance to you and may deprive your heart of liberty. It is strange that you do not commit yourself to Me heartily and fully, together with all your wants and wishes.

2. "Why be consumed with vain sorrow? why fatigue yourself with needless cares? Submit to My pleasure, and you will suffer no loss. If you seek this or that, and wish to be here or there, in order that you may more fully satisfy your own wishes, you will never be at rest, nor free from care, because in everything you will find some defect, and in every place you will find some cause of grief.

3. "You must estimate your profit therefore not by the number of things which you gain, but rather by those which you have learned to despise and to cut from your

heart by the roots : and this is to be understood not only of money and wealth, but also of honour and love of praise, which things all pass away with the fashion of this world. It matters not where you are, if you have not fervour of spirit within ; nor will any outward peace endure long, if it depend not upon the true foundation of the heart, that is, unless you rest upon Me. You may change yourself, but you cannot better yourself ; for, when occasion arises, you will find yourself present with all that you have fled from, and with much more beside."

*A PRAYER FOR PURIFICATION OF THE
HEART AND FOR HEAVENLY WISDOM.*

4. Confirm me, O God, by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit. Grant that I may be strengthened in the inner man, and that my heart may be free from all useless care and trouble ; that I may not be drawn hither and thither by lusts of other things creeping in, but may regard all things as passing away and myself as about to pass away with them : for there is nothing lasting under the sun ; all is *vanity and vexation of spirit*¹. O how wise is he who considers these things !

5. Give me, O Lord, heavenly wisdom, that I may learn to seek Thee beyond all other things and to find Thee, to desire Thee and love Thee above all things, and to see all things as they really are and as Thou Thyself seest them. Give me grace prudently to resist flattery and patiently to bear adversity ; for this is wisdom, not to be moved by the blast of vain words, and not to open the ear to him who speaks soft things ; this is the path of safety for all who walk through this present world.

CHAP. XXVIII. *AGAINST SLANDEROUS
TONGUES.*

1. "MY Son, be not grieved if any think evil of you, and say hard things concerning you which it is painful to hear. You ought to think worse things concerning your-

¹ Eccles. i. 14.

self than any that they can say of you, and to believe that there is no man more unworthy than yourself. If you walk in the light of your own conscience, you will not set much value upon empty words. It is no small prudence to be silent in the evil time and to fix the eye of your mind upon Me, and not to be disturbed by mere human opinion.

2. "Let not your peace consist in being well spoken of by men: for whether they judge you rightly or judge you wrongly, they cannot alter your condition in the sight of God. Where is true peace to be found? and where true glory? Are they not in Me? And he who does not desire to please men, nor fear to displease them, will enjoy much peace. All disquietude of heart and distraction of mind arise from ill-ordered affections and from vain fear."

CHAP. XXIX. *HOW IN THE MIDST OF TRIBULATION WE SHOULD CALL UPON GOD AND BLESS HIS NAME.*

1. BLESSED for ever be Thy Name, O Lord, who hast permitted this temptation and trial to come upon me. I cannot flee from it, but I can flee to Thee, and beseech of Thee that Thou wouldest support me under it and turn it to my good. Lord, I am in trouble, and it is not well with my heart, but my soul is vexed within me. And now, most merciful Father, what shall I say? I am in adversity. *Save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour*¹, that thou mightest be glorified, when I am humbled, and set at liberty by Thy power. *Let it be Thy pleasure, O Lord, to deliver me*²; for what can a poor creature like me do, and whither shall I go without Thee? Give me patience, O Lord, if only this once. Assist me, O my God; and then I will not fear, however grievously I be afflicted.

2. And now what shall I say? *Lord, Thy will be done*³. I have indeed deserved to be troubled and afflicted. Therefore I must bear,—and O that I may be enabled to bear

¹ S. Joh. xii. 27.

² Ps. xl. 16.

³ S. Matt. vi. 10.

patiently,—all that comes upon me until the storm be overpassed! Yet thy mighty hand is able to take away even this trial, and to mitigate its vehemence, that I may not altogether sink, even as Thou hast often done for me in former times, O Lord God of my salvation. And although deliverance may seem difficult to me, yet is it easy to Thee, O Thou most Highest!

CHAP. XXX. ON SEEKING DIVINE ASSISTANCE, AND ON CONFIDENCE IN THE RECOVERY OF GRACE.

1. "MY Son, I the Lord *am a strong hold in the day of trouble*¹. Come unto Me, when you are weary and heavy laden. It is this which chiefly hinders divine consolation, namely, that you are slow in betaking yourself to prayer. For before you turn yourself earnestly to Me, you seek many other comforts and refresh yourself with outward things: and so it comes to pass that nothing profits you much, until you are brought to perceive that it is only I who deliver those who trust in Me, and that out of Me there is no strong help, nor useful counsel, nor enduring aid. But now, having recovered yourself after the storm, refresh yourself in the light of My mercies; for I am near at hand, saith the Lord, to renew all things, not only sufficiently, but abundantly and beyond measure.

2. "Is anything too hard for Me, or shall I be as one who says and does not? Where is your faith? Stand firmly and unflinchingly. Be patient, and behave yourself like a man; consolation will come to you in due time. Wait for Me, yea wait: I will come and heal you. It is temptation, which troubles you; and vain fear, which terrifies you. What avails anxiety for the future, except to add sadness to sadness? *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*². It is vain and useless to be pleased or troubled concerning the future, which perhaps may never come.

¹ Nahum i. 7.

² S. Matt. vi. 34.

3. "But it is a merely human weakness to be deluded by imaginations of this kind, and it is a mark of the man being still in a childish condition that it should be so lightly carried away by the suggestions of the enemy. For truth *he* cares not whether he deludes and deceives by suggestions or by false; whether he gains a victory means of love of the present world or terrors of the world to come. Therefore *let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*¹. Believe in Me, and put your trust in My mercy. Often when you think that you are far from Me I am very near to you. Often when you think that all is well nigh lost, it is the time of your greatest gain. All is not lost, when anything happens contrary to you. You must not judge by present appearances, nor dwell much upon trouble, come it whence it may, as to that all hope of recovery is gone.

4. "Do not think yourself altogether forsaken, because I may have sent you trouble for a time, or have deprived you of some much valued consolation; for this is the true road to the kingdom of heaven. And doubtless it is better for you and for all My servants, that you should be exercised by adversity, than that you should have all things to your taste. I know the secrets of the heart: and I know that it is profitable for your salvation, that you should sometimes be left without comfort, lest you should be exalted above measure by prosperity, and should thus turn yourself to be that which you are not. I give, and I take away, as it seemeth best to Me.

5. "When I give, I give that which is My own; when I take away, I do not take away that which belongs to you: for *every good gift and every perfect gift* is Mine². I send you any grief or cross, do not be vexed, and let not your heart sink; I am able quickly to remove it, and to change all sorrow into joy. When I deal with you thus, you must confess Me to be true and just in My ways.

¹ S. John xiv. 27.

² S. James i. 17.

6. "If you are wise, and see things as they really are, you will never be saddened by adversity, but rather rejoice and give thanks; yea, this should be your comfort, that I afflict and do not spare you. *As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you*¹, so spake I once to My beloved disciples: and I sent them forth not to temporal joys, but to hard conflicts; not to honours, but to reproach; not to ease, but to labour; not to rest, but to bring forth much fruit with patience. My Son, remember these My words."

CHAP. XXXI. *ON THE DUTY OF NEGLECTING THE CREATURE, IN ORDER THAT WE MAY FIND THE CREATOR.*

1. LORD, I still require much more grace, before I arrive at that condition in which I shall be safe from all hindrances. For as long as any created thing has hold upon me, I am not able freely to fly to Thee. He desired this freedom, who said: *O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest!* What is more at rest than the eye which looks simply to Thy glory? And who more free than he, who desires nothing upon earth? It is necessary therefore to rise above all created things, and to go entirely out of self, and stand in ecstasy of mind, and to perceive that Thou being the Creator of all things hast amongst them nothing like Thyself. And unless a man be set free from the burden of the creature, he cannot freely exercise himself in things divine. For the reason why few know the happiness of heavenly contemplation, is that few know how to emancipate themselves completely from thoughts of the perishing things of this world.

2. For this purpose there is need of such grace as shall elevate the soul and lift it above itself. And unless a man's soul be raised above the world, and set free from the creature, and wholly united to God, whatever he may

¹ S. John xv. 9.

know, whatever he may possess, it is but of small value. He is in reality of little account, who esteems any thing to be great, save the One Infinite Eternal Good. For whatever is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing. There is a wide difference between the wisdom of the holy man, and the knowledge of the learned man. That wisdom which comes from above and which is revealed to babes is more noble and lasting and divine than the knowledge which human skill can acquire.

3.* There are many who desire to live a life of more meditation and retirement, but who are unwilling to exercise themselves in things necessary for such a life. One great impediment is that sensible things have too much influence, and there is not a sufficient mortification of the flesh. Even those who have entered in earnest upon the spiritual life, and are anxious to walk with God, are somehow easily seduced from their intentions, and are often found exhibiting as much anxiety concerning things which are to pass away as those who professedly lay up their treasure upon earth.

4. Alas! that it should be so; but every one who will examine his own heart will find that so it is. Few of us keep that watch upon our affections which we ought, and few of us loathe as we ought the corruption that still remains in us. In olden time *all flesh corrupted his way upon the earth*¹, and the great deluge was the consequence. When our inward affections are corrupted, then our outward acts, which are the index of that which is within, will be corrupt too. From a pure heart proceeds the fruit of a pure life.

5. We ask too readily, what a man can do or what he has done; we do not so carefully consider the principles upon which he acts. We ask whether a man is rich, handsome, clever, a notable writer, a great public character, a successful soldier; we do not care to inquire whether he is poor in spirit, patient and gentle, holy and

¹ Gen. vi. 12.

humble. Nature looks to that which is outward in a man, grace looks to that which is within. The former is frequently mistaken, the latter trusts in God and so is not deceived.

CHAP. XXXII. *ON SELF-DENIAL, AND THE FORSAKING OF ALL COVETOUS DESIRES.*

1. "My Son, you cannot possess perfect liberty unless you completely deny yourself. They are ever in bondage, who are lovers of self, covetous, careful about many things, hunters after pleasure, seeking always what is agreeable to flesh and blood and not the things of Jesus Christ, and therefore walking in an empty show and building upon a foundation which will not last: for all that is not of God must perish and come to nought. Hold fast this short and wise saying: 'Forsake all, and you will find all; forsake covetousness, and you will find rest.' Consider this well; and when you have learned to act upon it, you will understand all things."

2. Lord, this is not the work of one day, nor is it child's sport: in truth this single precept contains the very perfection of saints.

3. "My Son, be not cast down and dismayed when you have the way of perfection laid before you, but rather be provoked to attempt better things, or at least to sigh for them with earnest desire. O that it were so with you, and that you had arrived at such a condition, that you were no longer a lover of self, but ready to attend My nod, and to obey in all things the will of the Father whom I have revealed to you. Then you would be pleasing in My sight, and your whole life would be full of joy and peace. You have still many things to give up, and unless you leave them for My sake, you cannot have the things for which you pray. *I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich*¹, that is, to seek heavenly wisdom, which teaches you to despise all earthly things. Turn your back upon the mere wisdom of this world, and upon all merely human and selfish joys.

¹ Rev. iii. 18.

CHAP. XXXI. XXXII. XXXIII.

4. "I have said, that you must buy those things w are held cheap in this world rather than those w are accounted precious. For true heavenly wisd which thinks little of itself and does not desire ear gratification, is held very cheap and is almost passed of mind; many indeed talk about it with their lips, they do not follow it in their lives. Nevertheless it is hidden pearl of great price, which few persons find."

CHAP. XXXIII. ON INSTABILITY OF MI
AND ON MAKING GOD THE ULTIMA
END OF OUR ACTIONS.

1. "MY Son, beware of trusting too much to your l ings; they are one thing to-day and another to-morr As long as you live, you will be subject to instabil though against your wishes; joy, sorrow, peace, restless devotion, coldness, activity, sluggishness, solemnity thoughtlessness of mind will have their turns. But he is wise of heart stands higher than all such changes, considering what he may himself feel, or from what qu ter the wind of instability may blow, but rather whet the whole energy of his mind is directed towards the right and best end. Thus he will be able to remain shaken, ever one and the same, because the eye of mind is fixed throughout all changes upon Me and alone.

2. "And as the eye of the mind is more and m purged, so much the more steadily does he go through various storms of life. But often a darkness comes o the eye; it is tempted to look to some passing pleasu and it is seldom found altogether free from the blemish self-seeking. So in old time the Jews came to Martha a Mary at Bethany, *not to see Jesus only, but that they mi see Lazarus also*¹. Therefore the eye must be purg that its vision may be clear and true, and that it may directed to no intermediate objects, but to Me alone."

¹ S. John xii. 9.

CHAP. XXXIV. *THAT HE WHO LOVES GOD
DELIGHTS IN HIM ABOVE ALL THINGS
AND IN ALL THINGS.*

1. BEHOLD God is mine, and all things are mine through Him! What do I want more, what greater bliss can I desire? O sweet and comfortable thought! sweet to him who *loves not the world, neither the things that are in the world*¹. God is mine, and all things are mine through Him! This is enough for him who understands what it means, and it is pleasant even to repeat such words. When Thou art present, O my God, all is joy; when Thou art absent, all is weariness. Thou makest the heart to be at rest, and givest great peace and abundant joy. Thou makest men to be content in all conditions of life, and to praise Thee in all; nor can anything long continue to give pleasure without Thee; if anything be gratifying, Thy grace must be with it, and its savour must be the sweet savour of Thy wisdom.

2. If a man delight in Thee, where will he not find delight? And if a man delight not in Thee, where can he find pleasure? They who love this world, and are satisfied with carnal pleasures, cannot delight in Thee; for these things are full of vanity, and their end is death. But they who follow Thee, turning their backs upon worldly things and mortifying the flesh, shew their wisdom by their choice, because they leave vanity for truth, and flesh for spirit. To them God is the supreme delight, and whatever of good they find in the creature, they refer it all to the praise of the Creator. Different indeed, most different are the pleasures which spring from the Creator and the creatures, from eternity and from time, from light uncreated and from the reflected light of heaven.

3. O Light eternal, transcending all created lights, cause Thy bright beams to shine into me from above, and illuminate my inmost heart. Purify, gladden, en-

¹ 1 S. John ii. 15.

lighten and quicken my spirit with all its powers, that it may find its true joy in Thee. O when will that blessed and wished-for hour arrive, when Thou wilt satisfy me with Thy presence, and be to me *all and in all*¹? Until this be granted my joy cannot be full. Ah me! the old man still lives within me; he is not wholly crucified, he is not entirely dead; still he lusteth against the spirit, he stirs up strife within, he will not suffer my soul to be at rest.

4. But do Thou, *who rulest the raging of the sea, who stillest the waves thereof when they arise*², do Thou arise and help me. *Scatter the people, that delight in war*³; subdue them in Thy power. Shew forth Thy Majesty, I beseech Thee, and let Thy right hand be glorified, because there is no other hope or refuge for me, save in Thee, O Lord my God.

CHAP. XXXV. *THAT THERE IS NO SECURITY FROM TEMPTATION IN THIS LIFE.*

1. "MY Son, in this life, you can never be secure; but as long as you live you will always need spiritual armour. You dwell amongst enemies, and are attacked on the right hand and on the left. If therefore you do not use the shield of patience, on all sides of you, you will not be long without a wound. Above all, unless you set your whole heart steadily upon Me, you will not be able to bear the heat of the battle, nor to attain the reward of the blessed. Therefore you must go through the conflict manfully, and raise your hand bravely against all foes in your way. For *to him that overcometh is the hidden manna given*⁴, and misery remains in abundance for him who is sluggish in the fight.

2. "If you seek rest in this life, how do you think to arrive at the rest eternal? You must not lay yourself out for much rest, but rather for much patience. Seek true peace, not on earth, but in Heaven; not in men, nor in any other creature, but in God alone. For the love of God

¹ Col. iii. 11.

² Ps. lxxviii. 30.

³ Ps. lxxxix. 10.

⁴ Rev. ii. 17.

you ought willingly to submit to all things, to labours, sorrows, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injuries, obloquy, reproach, humiliation, shame, correction, contempt. These things are aids to piety; these things try new disciples; these things help to frame the heavenly crown. I give the wages of eternity for a short day of work, and infinite glory for transitory tribulation.

3. "Do you think that you will always have spiritual consolations according to your heart's desire? My saints have not found it so; rather have they met with many afflictions, and divers temptations, and hidings of God's face. But they have borne all with patience, and put their trust in God rather than in themselves, knowing that *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed*¹. Do you wish to have immediately that which others have hardly gained with many tears and after much labour? Wait on the Lord, behave yourself like a man, and be of good courage; do not distrust God, do not depart from Him; but give yourself up body and soul continually for His glory. I will abundantly repay you; *I will be with you in all trouble*²."

CHAP. XXXVI. AGAINST THE VAIN JUDGMENT OF MEN.

1. "My Son, fix your heart firmly upon the Lord, and do not fear human judgment, when your own conscience approves your conduct. It is a blessed and a happy thing to suffer thus; nor can it be grievous to a heart which is humble, and which trusts in God rather than in itself. Many there are who talk much, and on that account little confidence is to be placed in them. Moreover to please all men is not possible. S. Paul studied to please all in the Lord, *and to be all things to all men*³; and yet he was constrained to say, *With me it is a small thing that I should be judged of man's judgment*⁴.

¹ Rom. viii. 18.

² 1 Cor. ix. 22.

³ Ps. xci. 15.

⁴ 1 Cor. iv. 3.

2. "S. Paul laboured as much as he could for the edification and salvation of others; yet he could not escape being censured and even being despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God, who knows all things; and he defended himself by patience and humility against the mouths of those who spoke unrighteous things, or who imagined vain and lying thoughts, and who boasted themselves according to their own fancy. Nevertheless he sometimes made answer to his accusers, lest by the weak his silence should be misunderstood.

3. "*Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die*¹? He is here to-day, and to-morrow he is no more seen. Fear God, and you need not tremble at the terrors of men. What can any one do against you either by words or unkind deeds? He injures himself rather than you, nor can he escape the judgment of God, whoever he may be. Keep God always before your eyes, and do not contend with complaining words. And if you appear for the present to be cast down, and to suffer confusion which you have not deserved, do not repine at this, nor diminish your reward by impatience; rather look up to Me in heaven, who am able to save you from all confusion and trouble, and to render to every man according to his work."

CHAP. XXXVII. ON THE ENTIRE RESIGNATION OF SELF AND THE GAINING LIBERTY OF HEART THEREBY.

1. "My Son, leave yourself, and you shall find Me. Give up all choice and all thought of being your own, and you shall gain thereby. For an increase of grace shall be added to you, as soon as you resign yourself, and determine never to claim possession of yourself again."

2. Lord, how often shall I resign myself, and in what things shall I give up self?

3. "Always, in every hour of your life; as in small

¹ Isai. li. 12.

things, so also in great. I make no exception, but desire in all things to find you given up without reserve. Otherwise, how can you be Mine and I yours, unless you are set free within from all will of your own? The more readily you do this, so much the better will it be for you; and the more fully and sincerely you do it, so much the more will you please Me, and so much the greater will be your gain.

4. "Some resign themselves, but with reservation; for they do not wholly trust in God, and therefore they think that they must provide for themselves. Some again offer themselves up wholly at first, but afterwards when pressed by temptation retract their offering, and so make very little growth in grace. These cannot attain to the true liberty of a pure heart, and the sense of my presence and love, unless they resign themselves wholly, and offer themselves up a daily sacrifice; true union with Me cannot and will not stand without this.

5. "I have often said to you, and I now say again: Leave yourself, resign yourself, and you shall enjoy great inward peace. Give yourself up once and for all; make no terms, ask for nothing in return; rest simply and without hesitation upon Me, and you shall possess Me. You shall have liberty of heart, and the darkness shall have no power over you. Strive for this, pray for this, long for this, that you may be able to lose all possession of yourself, and simply follow Jesus; that you may be able to die to yourself, and live eternally to Me. Then all vain fancies will vanish, all needless troubles, all superfluous cares. Then also immoderate fear will depart from you, and inordinate love will die."

CHAP. XXXVIII. *ON CIRCUMSPECTION IN CONDUCT, AND THE NEED OF FLEEING TO GOD IN DANGERS.*

1. "My Son, you should make everything tend to this point, that in every place and in every action or occupation *you should be at liberty within and master of yourself, and*

that all things should be in subjection to you and not you to them; that you may be lord and ruler of your actions, not a slave or a hireling, but rather as bought with a price and enjoying the freedom and privileges of the sons of God; for these stand above the present world and see that which is eternal; they look at things temporal with the left eye, at heavenly things with the right; this world does not tempt them so as to make them love it, rather do they force the things of this world into the service of God, according to His own original will and purpose, who has left nothing in His creation without aim and meaning.

2. "If in all the changes and chances of this mortal life you rest not upon outward appearances, nor trust only to your own natural power of sight, but rather in all cases of doubt enter with Moses into the Tabernacle to consult the Lord, you will have sometimes a divine answer, and will return instructed concerning many things both present and to come. For Moses always had recourse to the Tabernacle for the solution of doubts and perplexities; and when he was pressed by dangers and by the unrighteousness of men he betook himself to the refuge of prayer. In like manner ought you also to flee into the hidden chamber of your own heart, and earnestly implore the divine succour. Moreover you will remember how Joshua and the children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites, because they *asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord*¹, but were too ready to listen to soft and lying words."

CHAP. XXXIX. *THAT A MAN MUST NOT BE TOO MUCH IMMERSED IN THE BUSINESS OF THIS WORLD.*

1. "MY Son, always commit your cause to Me; I will dispose of it aright in due time. Wait for Me, and you will find that all will be well."

2. Lord, I willingly commit all to Thee, for my own

¹ Joshua ix. 24.

schemes can profit me little. O that I could be indifferent to future events, and offer myself up to Thy pleasure without reservation or delay!

3. "My Son, men often strive vehemently for something upon which they have set their hearts; but when they attain it, they find it very different from what they expected, because their affections cannot rest durably upon one thing, but always run forward from one object to another. It is therefore no small matter even in small things to resist self.

4. "Man's true weal consists in denying himself; and the man who has denied himself is truly free and safe. But the old enemy, opposing all that is good, does not cease from temptations; night and day he makes ready his snares, if by any means he may be able to catch the careless in the trap of deceit. *Watch and pray*, saith the Lord, *that ye enter not into temptation*¹."

CHAP. XL. *THAT A MAN HAS NOTHING GOOD IN HIMSELF, AND NOTHING WHEREOF TO GLORY.*

1. *LORD, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him*²? What has man done, that Thou shouldest grant him Thy grace? Lord, how could I complain, if Thou shouldest leave me? or what could I say against Thee, if Thou shouldest not perform my requests? Certainly this I may think with myself, and this I may speak: Lord, I am nothing, I have no good thing in me, I am wanting in all things, and I ever tend towards nothing; and unless I be assisted and informed by Thy Spirit within, I become altogether lukewarm and dead.

2. But Thou, Lord, art ever the same, and Thou continuest to all eternity good, just, and holy; doing all things well, justly, and in holiness, and disposing all things in wisdom. But I, who am much more prone to backslide

¹ S. Matt. xxvi. 41.

² Ps. viii. 4.

than to advance, am not always in one state of mind. Nevertheless things change quickly for the better, when it pleaseth Thee, and when Thou stretchest forth Thine hand to help; because Thou alone without human aid canst so support and strengthen me, that my face shall no more be turned hither and thither, but my heart be converted to Thee and rest in Thee alone.

3. Wherefore, if I could only make up my mind to give up all human consolation, either for the sake of increased devotion, or from a sense of the necessity of seeking Thee, (because none upon earth can comfort me,) then I should be able to hope for Thy grace, and to rejoice in the gift of Thy consolation.

4. Thanks be to Thee, from whom everything comes, as often as it goes well with me! I am but vanity and nothing in Thy sight, weak and infirm of purpose. What have I to boast of, or why do I desire to be highly esteemed? Is it because I am nothing? surely this would be folly. In truth empty glory is an evil disease, the chiefest of vanities, because it draws away the heart from true glory and robs it of heavenly grace. For while a man pleases himself, he displeases Thee; while he gapes for human praises, he is deprived of true virtues.

5. Yet there is a true glory and a holy exultation, namely, to glory in Thee and not in ourselves; to rejoice in Thy Name, not in our own excellences; not to be satisfied with any created thing, but only with Thee. Let Thy Name, not mine, be praised; let Thy work, not mine, be magnified; let Thy holy Name be blessed, and let no human praises be given to me. Thou art my glory, Thou the joy of my heart. In Thee will I glory and make my boast all the day long, but of myself *I will not glory save in mine infirmities*¹.

6. Let the Jews seek honour one of another; I will seek that *which cometh from God alone*². In truth, all human glory, all temporal honour, all earthly exaltation, compared

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 5.

² S. John v. 44.

with Thy eternal glory, is vanity and folly. O my God, Thou who art Truth and Mercy, the blessed Trinity, to Thee alone be praise, honour, power, and glory, for ever and ever! Amen.

CHAP. XLI. *ON CONTEMPT OF ALL
WORLDLY HONOUR.*

1. "My Son, do not be envious, if you see others honoured and promoted, while you are despised and in obscurity. Raise your heart to Me in heaven, and the contempt of men on earth will not sadden you."

2. Lord, we are blind, and are easily seduced by vanity. If I rightly look upon myself, I perceive that no creature has ever done me wrong, and therefore I have no just cause of complaint against Thee. Rather, forasmuch as I have frequently and grievously sinned against Thee, all creatures might justly rise up against me. To me therefore belong shame and confusion of face, but to Thee praise, honour and glory. And unless I cheerfully prepare myself for being looked down upon and for appearing to be utterly nothing in the sight of men, I cannot be settled and at peace within, nor receive spiritual illumination, nor be fully united to Thee.

CHAP. XLII. *THAT OUR PEACE IS NOT TO
BE DEPENDENT UPON MEN.*

1. "My Son, if you make your peace to depend upon any person, because he is after your own heart and you have lived much in his society, you will be unsettled and without true peace; but if you rest upon the ever-living and abiding Truth, the loss or the death of a friend will not overwhelm you with grief. Friendship ought to have its foundation in Me, and whosoever appears good to you and is dear to you in this life is to be loved for My sake. Without Me friendship has no strength and will not last, nor is that love pure and true which is not based upon Me. You ought to be in such manner dead to the love of men, that you could even consent to forego all human

friendships for My sake. The less dependent a man is upon earthly supports, the more he will lean upon God. The higher he rises towards God, so much the more deeply is he abased in his own sight, and feels the more intensely his own imperfections.

2. "He who attributes to himself any good thing, hinders the grace of God from coming to him, because the grace of the Holy Spirit ever seeks the humble heart. If you could thoroughly feel yourself to be nothing, and get free from all love of the creature, then would grace flow in upon your soul abundantly. When you look upon the creature, you lose sight of the Creator. Learn to conquer yourself in all things, that you may find the Creator, and so arrive at divine knowledge. However trifling the thing may seem to be, still if you fix your mind upon and love anything inordinately, it keeps you back from your chief good, and does you harm."

CHAP. XLIII. *ON THE EMPTINESS OF MERE HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.*

1. "My Son, let not the lack of human knowledge trouble you, *for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*¹. Listen to My words, which influence the heart and enlighten the mind, which produce godly sorrow and convey abundant consolation. Never study for the sake of appearing more learned than your fellows, but study rather to overcome what is evil in you, for this will profit you more than the understanding of many hard questions.

2. "However much you have read and however much you know, you must still return to one principle. I am *He who teacheth men knowledge*², and I give to the babes what is hidden from the wise and prudent. When I speak to a man, forthwith he becomes wise, and his spirit is strengthened. Woe to those who are inquisitive concerning human knowledge, and care little concerning the right way of serving Me! The time will come when Christ will

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 20.

² Ps. xciv. 10.

appear as the Teacher of all teachers, the Lord of Angels, who will hear what each man has learned, that is, will examine the consciences of all. Then shall *Jerusalem be searched with candles*¹, and the *hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light*², and the strife of tongues cease.

3. "I am He who can in a moment so enlighten the mind, as to give more insight into eternal truth than can be gained by years of study in the schools. I teach without strife of words, without confusion of opinions, without the excitement of ambition, without the battle of contending arguments. I am He who can teach how to despise earthly things, to look beyond the present, to seek things heavenly, to relish things eternal, to think little of honours, to suffer offenses, to place all hope in Me, to desire nothing besides Me, and to love Me beyond all other things.

4. "There have been those, who by loving Me have learned divine mysteries, and have been able to speak wonderful things: leaving all to follow Me has taught them more than the most subtle studies. But I speak to some in one way and to some in another; to some I make Myself known gently by signs and figures, to others I reveal Myself with a flood of light and make them to understand mysteries. Books have their voice, but it does not speak to all alike; I am the Inward Teacher of truth, the Searcher of the heart, the Discerner of the thoughts, the Mover of good actions, giving to each man his work and power to perform it as I think fit."

CHAP. XLIV. ON INDIFFERENCE TO OUTWARD THINGS.

1. "MY Son, in many things you must needs be ignorant, and consider yourself as one dead to the world, and to whom the world has been crucified. To many things it will be well for you to turn a deaf ear, and to think rather of those things which more concern your peace. It is

¹ Zeph. i. 12.

² 1 Cor. iv. 5.

better to turn your eyes from things which are displeasing to you, and to let every man think of you as he pleases, than to involve yourself in a strife of words. If you stand well with God, and are acquitted by His judgment, you need not fear what men can do unto you."

2. Lord, to what a condition have we come? Temporal losses cause us sore trouble; we work and weary ourselves for small gain, and we forget our spiritual losses and rarely recover them. We strive for that which is of little or no profit; and the one thing needful we pass over and neglect. We give ourselves to the pursuit of things outward and temporal; and unless we soon find out our mistake and repent, we settle down in the enjoyment of such things and allow ourselves to be satisfied with them.

CHAP. XLV. *THAT WE MUST NOT GIVE
OUR CONFIDENCE READILY TO ALL,
AND ON THE FACILITY OF SINNING BY
OUR WORDS.*

1. *O be Thou my help in trouble, Lord, for vain is the help of man*¹. How often have I found that confidence could not be reposed where I had thought that it might! How often also have I found it where I least expected it! Vain therefore is hope in men; the salvation of the just must be in Thee, O God. Blessed be Thou, O Lord my God, in all things which happen unto us. We are weak and unstable, we are easily deceived and soon changed.

2. What man is he, that is able to keep himself so cautiously and circumspectly in all things, that he shall never fall into any error or perplexity? Yet he who putteth his trust in Thee, O Lord, and seeketh Thee with a simple heart, does not so easily fall. And if he have fallen into any tribulation, in whatever degree he may have become involved in it, he will be speedily delivered by Thee, or will by Thee be comforted, because Thou wilt

¹ Ps. lx. 11.

never fail him who hopeth in Thee. It is hard to find a faithful friend, who will stick close in all adversity. Thou, Lord, Thou alone art most faithful in all changes, and besides Thee there is none else.

3. O how thoroughly did that holy soul go to the heart of the matter, who said, "My mind is settled, and grounded in Christ!" If it were so with me, the fear of man would not so easily trouble me, nor the darts of men's words move me. Who is able to foresee everything and to provide against future evils? If things foreseen frequently do the soul mischief, how can things unforeseen do otherwise than wound severely? But why have I not provided better? why have I trusted to others so easily? We are but men; and frail men too, even those of us who are accounted by many to be as angels. In whom shall I trust, in whom but Thee, O Lord? Thou art the truth, which neither deceiveth, nor can be deceived. And again: *The children of men are deceitful upon the weights, they are altogether lighter than vanity itself*¹; infirm are they and unstable and plausible in speech; it is not well to put confidence in them.

4. Thou hast wisely forewarned us, *to beware of men*, and that *a man's foes shall be they of his own household*², and that we must not believe when they say, *Lo here, or Lo there*³! I have been taught by experience, and would that I had learned caution and wisdom! I have often found confidence misplaced, and those in whom I thought I could safely rely have betrayed both themselves and me. From such false friends, good Lord, deliver me; let me not fall into their hands, and guard me from doing such things myself! Let truth and honesty ever go forth of my mouth, and keep far from me a crafty and deceitful tongue. That which I do not wish to suffer myself, grant that I may be careful not to inflict upon others!

5. O how good it is and how much it makes for peace to be silent concerning others, and not to believe all things

¹ Ps. lxii. 9.² S. Matt. x. 17. 36.³ S. Luke xvii. 21.

readily, nor to speak one's thoughts too freely, to open one's heart only to a few, to look ever to Thee th Searcher of hearts, and not to be carried away by every blast of vain words, but to strive to do all things at all times and in all places in accordance with Thy holy will! How much it tends to the conservation of heavenly grace to flee from human applause, not to study those things which win admiration from those without, but rather to follow earnestly such things as tend to holiness and to amendment of life! How much injury have many suffered from their virtues being known and published and praised too soon! How much better is grace guarded in silence during this frail life, which is throughout a condition of trial and warfare!

CHAP. XLVI. *ON HOLDING FAST OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD AMID THE STRIFE OF TONGUES.*

1. "MY Son, stand firmly and hope in Me. For what are words, but words? They fly through the air, but they do no mischief. If you are guilty, consider well how you can amend what is amiss; and if you are conscious of innocence, make up your mind to bear your trouble patiently for the sake of God. It is not enough, that you should be able to bear words, if you cannot also bear rougher treatment still. And why do such small things move you, except because you are still carnal, and think more of the reproach of man than you ought? For you are afraid of being despised, and therefore you shrink from blame, and are anxious to hide yourself under excuses.
2. "But look more closely into your heart, and you will perceive that the world still lives within you, and the vain desire of pleasing men. For whereas you shrink from being humbled and put to confusion for your faults, it is evident that you are not lowly of heart, nor truly dead to the world, nor the world crucified to you. But listen to My word, and you will not care for ten thousand

words of men. If everything should be spoken against you, which the utmost malice could devise, what harm would it do you, if you allowed it to pass by you, and heeded it no more than a straw? would it cause the loss of so much as a single hair of your head?

3. "He who does not examine his own heart, and keep God always before his eyes, is easily moved by words of blame; but he who trusts in Me, and does not desire to stand or fall by his own judgment, will be free from the fear of man. I am the Judge and Discerner of secrets: I know the motives upon which actions are done: I know him who does an injury, and him who sustains one. From Me hath this word gone forth; by My permission hath that event happened; *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*¹. I will judge between the guilty and the innocent; but at present My judgment is secret, that I may try what is in their hearts.

4. "The testimony of men is often deceitful; My judgment is true; it shall stand, and shall not be overthrown. Often it is secret, and known only by a few; but it never errs, nor can err, although to the eyes of fools it may seem not to be correct. To Me all judgments should be referred, and men should not rest upon their own opinion. *There shall no evil happen to the just*². And even if things be brought against him unjustly, he will not be much moved; but neither will he vainly boast, if reasonable men acquit him. For he considers all the while, that I am *He who trieth the very heart and reins*³, and who judgeth not according to appearance and that which human eye can see: for often that is found in My eyes to be worthy of blame, to which men have awarded praise."

5. O Lord God, *the righteous Judge, strong and patient*⁴, who knowest the frailty and sinfulness of men, do Thou be my strength, and Thou all my confidence, for I am not sufficient in myself. Thou knowest that which I know

¹ S. Luke ii. 35.

² Ps. vii. 10.

³ Prov. xii. 21.

⁴ Ps. vii. 12.

not ; and therefore when ever blame comes upon me, I do well to humble myself, and to bear it meekly. ' Graciously pardon me, as often as I have acted otherwise, and grant me the grace of increased patience. For Thy abundant mercy can more easily give me pardon for what is amiss, than my own belief in my integrity can clear me from blame. *Though I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified*¹; for, apart from Thy mercy, *no man living can be justified in Thy sight*².

CHAP. XLVII. *THAT THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE SHOULD ENABLE US TO BEAR ALL TROUBLES IN THIS WORLD.*

1. "My Son, let not the labours which you have undertaken for My sake break your spirit, nor let troubles too much deject you ; but rather let My promise strengthen you, and console you under all circumstances. I am able to repay you beyond all measure or conception. You will not have long to labour here, and you will not always have to endure grief. Wait a little while, and you will speedily see the end of your troubles. An hour will come, when all labour and tumult will cease. All that passes away with time is short-lived and of small account.

2. "Whatsoever you do, do it with your might. Labour faithfully in My vineyard ; I will be your reward. Write, read, watch, pray, labour diligently, bear troubles manfully: eternal life is worth all these efforts, and much greater ones. Peace will come in the Lord's good time ; then there will be no day nor night, but light perpetual, brightness infinite, stedfast peace, and secure rest. You will not then have to say, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death*³? neither will you exclaim, *Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell*⁴ here! for death will be destroyed, and salvation will be sure ; there will be no anxiety, but perfect bliss, and sweet companionship with the blessed.

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 4.

² Rom. vii. 24.

³ Ps. cxliii. 2.

⁴ Ps. cxx. 4.

3. "O if you could only see the unfading crowns of the Saints in Heaven, and could know the glory which now belongs to those, who were once despised by the world and thought unworthy of life, you would at once humble yourself to the earth, and desire to be last of all and servant of all; neither would you covet the joys of this world, but would rather rejoice in suffering tribulation for God's sake, and would think it your highest gain to be lightly esteemed amongst men.

4. "O if these things really affected your mind and sank deeply into your heart, how could you dare even once to complain? Are not all labours which you can undergo trifling in comparison with eternal life? It is no small matter to lose or to gain the kingdom of God. Lift up therefore your face towards Heaven. Behold Me, and all My Saints with Me; in this life they had great conflicts, but now they rejoice, now they are comforted, now they are safe, now they are at rest, and they will live with Me evermore in My Father's kingdom."

CHAP. XLVIII. *ON THE ETERNAL DAY AND THE TROUBLES OF THIS LIFE.*

1. O BLESSED mansions of the heavenly city! O bright eternal day, which night obscures not, but which Truth itself ever illumines! Day ever joyful, ever secure, and subject to no change! O that that day had dawned, and all things of time had come to an end! It shines upon the Saints with perpetual splendour, but only from afar, and as in a glass darkly, to those who are yet pilgrims upon earth.

2. The citizens of heaven know how joyous that day is. The banished children of Eve groan, because their day is bitter and wearisome. The days of this present life are short and evil, full of troubles and sorrows; for here men are polluted by many sins, entangled by many passions, enslaved by many fears, racked by many cares, distracted by many doubts, engrossed by many vanities, compassed about by many errors, worn down by many labours, op-

pressed by temptations, weakened by pleasures, afflicted by want.

3. O when shall these ills come to an end? When shall I be set free from the miserable bondage of vices? When shall I speak of Thee alone, O Lord? When shall I rejoice fully in Thee? When shall I walk at liberty without any let or hindrance, without any burden either of body or mind? When shall I enjoy solid peace, peace unbroken and secure, peace without and peace within, peace firm on every side? Blessed Jesus, when shall I stand in Thy presence and behold Thee? When shall I see the glory of Thy kingdom? When wilt Thou be to me *all and in all*? O when shall I be with Thee in Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for Thy beloved from all eternity? I am left poor and an outcast in a hostile land, where there is continual warfare and very great distress.

4. Comfort me in my banishment, soften my grief, for to Thee only is all my desire. The comfort that the world offers is only a burden to me. I desire to possess Thee fully, but as yet I cannot. I wish to have my conversation in Heaven, but temporal things and unmortified passions press me down to earth. With my spirit I long to triumph over all earthly things, but my flesh compels me to yield them the victory. Thus, wretched man that I am, I am at war with myself, and feel myself to be a burden, whilst my spirit strives to be above and my flesh to remain below.

5. O how painful it is sometimes, when I endeavour to fix my mind upon heavenly things, to find my prayers disturbed by a crowd of carnal thoughts! *My God, go not Thou far from me*¹, nor leave Thy servant in anger. *Cast forth Thy lightning, and tear them; shoot out Thine arrows, and consume them*², and let all the devices of the enemy be brought to nought. Bring back my scattered thoughts to Thee; cause me to forget all earthly things; enable me to cast away and abhor all evil fancies. Succour

¹ Col. iii. 11.

² Ps. lxxi. 12.

³ Ps. cxliv. 6.

me, O eternal Truth, that no vanity may be able to move me. Come to me, O heavenly Love, and let all that is impure flee from before Thy face. Pardon me also, and look upon me gently and with pity, as often as in my prayers I think upon ought else beside Thee: for my mind is often distracted, as I confess with shame. I am not always there, where my body is; I am rather to be found there, whither my thoughts carry me. I am there, where my thoughts are. Often my thoughts are there, where are my affections. Things which naturally have charms for me, or which by habit are pleasing, too easily gain entrance into my mind.

6. Wherefore Thou, O eternal Truth, hast said, *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*¹. If I love heaven, I willingly muse upon heavenly things: if I love the world, I rejoice in the happiness of the world, and am saddened by thought of its adversities. If I love the flesh, my mind is often occupied with things which concern the flesh: if I love the spirit, my delight is in thinking upon spiritual things. For whatever things I really love, concerning them I gladly speak and hear, and of such things I carry home the remembrance with me. But blessed is the man, O Lord, who for Thy sake is content to let all created things depart from his mind; who does violence to nature, and in zeal for the spirit crucifies the flesh, with its affections and lusts: so that with a pure conscience he may offer up true prayers to Thee, and, all earthly thoughts banished from his mind, may be worthy of taking part in the chorus of angels.

CHAP. XLIX. *ON THE DESIRE OF ETERNAL LIFE, AND THE GREATNESS OF THE REWARDS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH.*

1. "My Son, if you feel the desire of eternal bliss poured into your heart from above, and you long to be set

¹ S. Matt. vi. 21.

free from your earthly tabernacle, so that you may be able to contemplate without a shadow the brightness of My presence, then open your heart, and receive with all joy the holy inspiration. Give thanks abundantly to the Supreme Goodness, which deals with you so condescendingly, visits you so lovingly, stirs you up so fervently, assists you so powerfully, that you may not by your own weight be dragged down to earth. For indeed you have not gained this by your own thought or efforts, but solely by the condescension of supreme mercy and divine compassion; and such grace has been given you, in order that you may grow in virtue and humility, and may prepare yourself for future conflicts, and may endeavour to cleave unto Me with full purpose of heart, and study to serve Me with all the fervour of your will.

2. "My Son, when fire burns, the flame seldom rises without smoke. So also the desires of some burn up towards heaven, and yet they are not free from the temptation of carnal lust. Therefore they do not act from a pure zeal for the honour of God, while they make their prayers to Him so earnestly. Such also is often the nature of your desire of eternal bliss, which you imagine to be so earnest. It is not pure and perfect, because it is tainted with self-love.

3. "Ask, not that which is pleasant and delightful to yourself, but rather that which is acceptable to Me and which tends to My honour; for if you judge aright, you will prefer My commands to your own desire and indeed to everything which can be desired, and you will follow them. I know your desire, and have heard all your groans. Now you long for *the glorious liberty of the children of God*¹; now the thought of the eternal home delights you, and the heavenly country full of joys unspeakable: but the hour is not yet come; the present is a time of war, a time of labour, a time of trial. You desire to be filled with supreme blessedness, but you cannot in

¹ Rom. viii. 21.

this way attain your end. *I am*: wait upon Me, until the kingdom of God shall come.

4. "You are still to be proved while on earth, and to be exercised in many things. Consolation will be granted to you the while, but not in all its fulness. Be strong therefore, and courageous in acting as well as in suffering. You must put on the new man, and become a new creature. It is needful for you often to do what does not please you; and that which pleases you you must often be content to give up. To do that which pleases others will be profitable to you; to please yourself, unprofitable. Others will be listened to when they speak; when you speak, it will seem to go for nothing. Others will ask and receive; you will ask and be disappointed. Others will be much in the mouths of men; nothing will be said of you. Others will have work entrusted to them; you will seem to be considered as good for nothing.

5. "For this cause your spirit will sometimes be saddened; and it is a great matter if you bear it all patiently. In this and many like things the faithful servant of the Lord must be proved, how far he can deny himself and renounce himself in all things. There is scarcely anything which requires such mortification of spirit, as to be able to endure with patience things which contradict your will; especially when you are unable to see the reason of your chastisement, and the end which God has in view in His severe dealings with you.

6. "But consider, My Son, the fruit of your labours, the speedy end, the glorious reward; and then the burden will seem light and the consolation abundant. For submission to the will of God is the law of heaven, as it is of earth; but there submission is without sorrow. There every need will be supplied. *There neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and thieves do not break through nor steal*¹. There your will, being ever one with Mine, will have no selfish longings. There no one will grieve you; but all

¹ S. Matt. vi. 19.

things that you can desire will be supplied, and will fill every corner of your heart. There I will repay with glory insult suffered in this world; I will give the *garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*¹. The lowest room in this world shall be exchanged for a throne in My kingdom for evermore. There the fruit of obedience shall be made apparent, repentance shall turn to joy, and humble submission shall receive a crown of glory.

7. "Now therefore be submissive under My hands; be not careful to know why this or that is ordered, but let it be enough for you that God has ordered it, and that He knows what is best. Trouble not yourself with others; let one man seem to be successful in this, and another in that; let this man prosper, and that man be praised by thousands: but measure yourself by neither one nor the other; rather learn humility, and to glory in Me and in My honour alone. This is to be the end of your wishes, that, *whether it be by life or by death, God may be ever magnified in you*²."

CHAP. L. *HOW A MAN WHO FEELS THE
WEAKNESS OF ALL OTHER SUPPORTS
SHOULD CAST HIMSELF INTO THE
HANDS OF GOD.*

1. "O LORD my God, Holy Father, blessed be Thou now and for evermore; for Thou speakest the word and it is done, and what Thou doest is very good. Let Thy servant rejoice in Thee, not in himself, nor in any other creature; for Thou alone art the true gladness, Thou art my hope and crown, Thou art my joy and my honour, O Lord. What hath Thy servant, save what he hath received of Thee, and that without merit of his own? All things which Thou hast given, and which Thou hast made, are Thine. *I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die, even from my youth up*³, and my soul is sometimes saddened even to tears, and sometimes it is

¹ Isai. lxi. 3.

² Phil. i. 20.

³ Ps. lxxxviii. 15.

perplexed and troubled by the dread of the sufferings which hang over me.

2. I desire the blessing of peace; I ask for the peace of Thy children, who are fed by Thee in the light of Thy own consolations. If Thou give peace, if Thou pour into my heart holy joy, the soul of Thy servant will be filled with songs of delight and will sing Thy praise all the day long. But if Thou withdraw Thyself, how can I run in the way of Thy commandments? shall I not rather beat my breast in despair? O let it be with me as in months past when Thy hand preserved me, *when Thy candle shined upon my head, and when by Thy light I walked through darkness*¹, when I had refuge *under the shadow of Thy wings* from the power of temptation².

3. O righteous Father, worthy of all praise, the hour is come when Thy servant must be proved. O beloved Father, it is right that in this hour of trial Thy servant should suffer something for Thy sake. O Father, worthy of all honour and reverence, the hour is come, which Thou knewest from all eternity, when Thy servant should for a while die to the world without, but should ever live with Thee within; when he should be little esteemed, humbled, despised of men; should be worn with sufferings and infirmities, that he might rise again with Thee in the morning of a new light, and be glorified in heaven. Holy Father, so Thou hast ordained, so Thou hast willed; and it has come to pass, as Thou hast commanded.

4. For it is a grace granted by Thee to those whom Thou lovest, that they should suffer and be troubled in the world for Thy love, as often as and at whose hands soever Thou permittest it to take place. Without Thy counsel and providence, and without good cause, nothing happens upon earth. *It is good for me, Lord, that I have been in trouble, that I may learn Thy statutes*³, and may cast away from me all pride and presumption of heart. It is good for me that confusion has covered my face, that

¹ Job xxix. 3.

² Ps. xvii. 8.

³ Ps. cxix. 71.

I may learn to seek consolation from Thee rather than from men. I have learned also from this to fear Thy unsearchable judgment, who afflictest the just with the unjust, but not without justice and equity.

5. Thanks be to Thee, because Thou hast not spared my faults, but hast beaten me with the stripes of love, inflicting pain, and sending trouble upon me without and within. There is no one, who can comfort me, of all those who inhabit heaven, except Thee, O Lord my God, the heavenly Physician of souls, *who smitest and healest, who bringest down to hell and bringest up again*¹. Thy discipline shall be upon me, and Thy rod shall teach me.

6. Beloved Father, I am in Thy hands, I bow myself under the rod of Thy correction. Bend my stiff neck to Thy most holy will. Make me a pious and humble disciple, even as Thou hast hitherto been gracious unto me, that I may walk according to Thy good pleasure. I commend myself and all that I have to Thy correction: it is better to be corrected in this world, than punished in the world to come. Thou knowest all things, and nothing that is in the human heart can be secret from Thee. Before things come to pass Thou knowest them, and there is no need that any one should teach Thee or inform Thee of things that are done upon earth. Thou knowest what is for my good, and how tribulation serves to purge away the rust of my faults. Do with me what Thou wilt, and despise not my sinful life, the defects of which are known to none better or more clearly than to Thee.

7. Grant me, Lord, to know what ought to be known; to love that which ought to be loved; to praise that which most pleases Thee; to value that which is most precious to Thee; to hate that which is filthy in Thy eyes. Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of my bodily eyes, nor to form my opinions according to the hearing of the ears of foolish men; but to have a true and just discern-

¹ Tob. xiii. 2.

ment of things both visible and spiritual; and above all things to inquire always what is Thy will.

8. Men are often deceived in judging; the lovers of this present world are deceived in the very things which they love most. Is a man really better, because he is considered great by a fellow-man? The fallible deceives the fallible, the vain the vain, the blind the blind, the weak the weak, while he extols him; and while he bestows upon him empty praise, he in reality puts him to shame. For, according to the saying of S. Francis, "What every one is in Thine eyes, that is he and no more."

CHAP. LI. *THAT WE SHOULD EMPLOY OURSELVES IN HUMBLE SERVICE, WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES UNEQUAL TO WORKS OF A HIGHER KIND.*

1. "MY Son, you are not able to continue always in the fervent desire of holiness, nor to stand upon the level of lofty contemplation; but you must not on this account neglect the smaller matters, and you must bear the burden of life patiently, though it gall and weary you. As long as you bear about a mortal body, so long you will feel weariness and heaviness of heart. You ought therefore while in the flesh often to bewail the burden of the flesh, which hinders you from continuing always in spiritual exercises and divine contemplation.

2. "Betake yourself to the humble path of practical piety, and refresh yourself by doing good; think of My Advent with firm faith, bear your absence from Me and your barrenness of mind patiently, until I visit you again, and set you free from all trouble of mind. For I will cause you to forget your troubles, and to enjoy peace within. I will open before you the green pastures of the Scriptures, so that with heart set at liberty you may run the way of My Commandments. And then you will say, *The sufferings of this present time are*

not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed¹."

CHAP. LII. *THAT A MAN OUGHT NOT TO
DEEM HIMSELF WORTHY OF CONSOLA-
TION, BUT RATHER OF CHASTISEMENT.*

1. LORD, I am not worthy of thy consolation, nor of any spiritual visitation; and therefore Thou dealest with me justly, when Thou leavest me poor and desolate. For though I could shed a sea of tears, I should still be unworthy. I am worthy only of chastisement, because I have often and grievously sinned against Thee, and in many things have broken Thy law. Therefore in strict justice I am not worthy of any consolation. But Thou, O kind and merciful God, willest not that any should perish; Thou shewest the riches of Thy goodness to vessels of mercy, and deignest to comfort Thy servant immeasurably beyond all his deserts. For Thou givest not as man giveth.

2. What have I done, Lord, that Thou shouldest bestow any comfort upon me? There is no good thing in me, and I have ever been prone to evil and slow in amendment. It is the truth, and I cannot deny it. If I should speak otherwise, Thou wouldest stand against me, and there would be none to defend me. What have I deserved for my sins, but the fire of hell? In truth I am worthy of shame and contempt, and not to be reckoned amongst Thy holy ones. And although it is sad for me to confess this, yet I will acknowledge my sins to the full, that so thou mayest have mercy upon me.

3. Guilty and full of confusion as I am, what shall I say? I have no mouth to say anything, save only this: "I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; have mercy upon me, pardon me." Let me *take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death²*. What can a sinner do, but humble

¹ Rom. viii. 18.

² Job x. 20, 21.

himself for his sins? When the heart has become truly contrite, the hope of pardon springs up, the troubled conscience is appeased, the favour of God is recovered, the man is protected from wrath, and God and the penitent soul meet each other with a holy kiss.

4. The humble contrition of sinners is a sacrifice acceptable to Thee, O Lord, sweeter far in Thy sight than the smell of frankincense. This is the ointment which should be poured out upon Thy sacred feet, because *Thou wilt not despise a broken and contrite heart*¹. In this is the place of refuge from the face of the enemy. In this whatever pollution has been contracted by the soul may be purified and washed away.

CHAP. LIII. *THAT THE GRACE OF GOD IS
HINDERED BY THE LOVE OF EARTHLY
THINGS.*

1. "MY Son, My grace is very precious, and all earthly comforts must be held as nothing in comparison with it. If you wish to enjoy the infusion of My grace, you must guard against everything which may hinder its operation. Be much with God in secret, love retirement, be not too much dependent upon society; make your earnest prayer to God, that you may keep a contrite heart and a pure conscience. Value the whole world as of no account; set the enjoyment of God's presence before all earthly things. For indeed you cannot delight in Me, and at the same time have your heart set upon the things which must pass away. Even those whom you love may be hindrances to you, if they too much engross your heart. And so the blessed Apostle Peter beseeches Christians, that they would, *as strangers and pilgrims*² in this world, hold fast in their loyalty to Christ.

2. "O what a support it is to a man in the prospect of death, to feel that his heart is not bound to this world! But the mind does not naturally love to be thus weaned

¹ Psal. li. 17.

² 1 Pet. ii. 11.

from the world, nor does the natural man know the blessing of liberty within. If a man really desires to become spiritual, he must renounce all things which interfere with this great end, and be more on his guard against himself than against anything else. If you once perfectly conquer yourself, you will more easily subdue other things. It is a perfect victory to triumph over self. For he who holds himself in subjection, so that sense may submit to reason, and reason in all things submit itself to Me, he truly is the conqueror of himself, and the lord of the world.

3. "If you would climb to this height, you must begin manfully, and lay the axe to the root, so that you may pluck up and destroy every secret tendency to love of self and love of the world. Upon this radical fault of inordinate self-love hangs almost all that which it is necessary for you to subdue; and when this evil has been conquered, you will at once enjoy great peace and tranquillity. But forasmuch as few strive to die to self completely, and to reach out to something beyond themselves, therefore the many remain wrapped up in self and cannot rise in spirit above self. But he who will walk with Me at liberty, must mortify all depraved and inordinate affections, and not suffer his affections to be fixed upon any earthly thing."

CHAP. LIV. *ON THE MOTIONS OF NATURE
AND OF GRACE.*

1. "MY Son, mark carefully the motions of Nature and of Grace, for they are very contrary the one to the other, and withal very subtle, so that they can hardly be distinguished except by one who is spiritual and enlightened within. All men seek what appears to them to be good, and desire that something good should be found in their words and actions; and so under the appearance of good many are deceived.

2. "Nature is cunning and entices many, entraps and deceives them, and never holds up any higher end of action than herself; but Grace walks in simplicity, and

shuns every appearance of evil, is altogether free from deceit, and does all things purely and simply for the sake of God, in whom also she finally rests.

3. "Nature is unwilling to die, or to be oppressed, or to be subdued, or to submit even of her own accord; but Grace seeks self-mortification, resists the allurements of sense, seeks to be subdued, wishes to be overcome, and does not desire to enjoy full liberty; she loves to be kept under discipline, and does not wish to rule over any, but always to live, move, and have her being in God; and for God's sake she is willing to become the last of all and servant of all.

4. "Nature labours for her own advantage, and ever considers what profit will come to her from her intercourse with others; but Grace considers, not what will be useful and profitable to herself, but rather what will be to the advantage of the many.

5. "Nature gladly receives honour and reverence; but Grace attributes all honour and glory to God alone.

6. "Nature fears shame and contempt; but Grace rejoices to suffer reproach for the Name of Jesus.

7. "Nature loves ease and bodily comfort; but Grace cannot bear to be idle, and ever seeks work to do.

8. "Nature desires what is costly and beautiful, and shuns the vile and common; but Grace delights in the simple and the humble, does not spurn rough fare, and is not ashamed of poverty.

9. "Nature looks to things temporal, rejoices in earthly gains, is saddened by losses, is irritated by harsh words; but Grace looks to things eternal, is not bound up with things temporal, is not moved by losses, nor embittered by hard words, because she has laid up her treasure and her joy in heaven, where nothing perishes.

10. "Nature is covetous, receives much more willingly than she gives, loves her own; but Grace is liberal and unselfish, is contented with little, deems it *more blessed to give than to receive*¹.

¹ Acts xx. 35.

11. "Nature looks to the creature, to the flesh, to vanity and dissipation ; but Grace ever points to God and holiness, renounces the creature, turns her back upon the world, hates the lusts of the flesh, is modest and retiring in her habits and conversation.

12. "Nature gladly avails herself of any external comfort, anything which tends to bodily ease and gratification ; but Grace seeks comfort in God alone, and desires to be satisfied in Him beyond all visible joys.

13. "Nature does everything for gain and for her own advantage, cannot do anything for love, but hopes to obtain for all services done either an equivalent or something more, or at least praise or favour, and desires to have her gifts and deeds valued to the utmost ; but Grace seeks no temporal gain, nor asks for any reward except God alone ; neither does she concern herself with things temporal, except so far as the pursuit of these may be made to serve towards the obtaining of things eternal.

14. "Nature rejoices in possessing many relations and friends, glories in high station and noble birth, courts the powerful, flatters the rich, applauds those who are like herself ; but Grace loves her enemies, is not puffed up by the number of her friends, and does not think much of birth and station, unless joined with something which birth and station cannot give ; she favours the poor rather than the rich, courts the society of the pure rather than of the powerful ; rejoices in the truthful, not in those who flatter with their lips ; ever exhorts those who are walking with God to press on towards perfection, and to imitate the holiness of the Son of God.

15. "Nature quickly complains of want and trouble ; but Grace bears poverty with patience.

16. "Nature considers all things with reference to self, labours for self, argues on behalf of self ; but Grace refers all things to God, from whom they originally come ; she ascribes to self no good thing, is free from arrogance and presumption ; she is not contentious, neither does she pre-

fer her own opinion to that of others, but in all matters submits herself to the eternal wisdom and to the infallible judgment of God.

17. "Nature desires to know things which are kept secret and to hear something new; she wishes to be thought clever and knowing; she longs to become notable, and to gain praise and admiration for what she does; but Grace has no care for what is merely new and curious, because she knows that there is nothing really either new or durable upon earth. Therefore she teaches to restrain the senses, to avoid self-complacency and ostentation, to hide with humility deeds which are worthy of being praised and admired, and in every act and every study to seek the fruit of usefulness and the praise and honour of God. She does not desire that she and her doings should be published abroad, but rather that God should be blest in His gifts, who gives all things freely and in love.

18. "This grace is a light supernatural, and a special gift of God, and a mark of the elect, and a pledge of eternal salvation; it raises man from earthly things to love those which are heavenly, and from being carnal makes him spiritual. The more therefore Nature is kept down and subdued, so much the more abundantly is grace infused; and the inner man is daily by new visitations of Grace transformed according to the image of God."

CHAP. LV. ON THE CORRUPTION OF NATURE, AND THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE.

1. O LORD my God, who hast created me after Thine own image and likeness, grant me this grace, which Thou hast shewn to be so great and so necessary to salvation; that I may conquer my corrupt nature, which draws me to sin and perdition. For I feel in my flesh the law of sin, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive to obey the enticements of sense; neither can I resist my passions, unless assisted by Thy most holy grace, *infused abundantly into my heart.*

2. I have need of Thy Grace, and of a large supply, in order to subdue Nature, which *is prone to evil from her youth*¹. For the ills of the fall of Adam, and of the pollution of human nature through his sin, have descended upon all men; so that the nature, which came from Thy hands upright and good, is now so weakened and corrupted, that its motions are ever downwards and towards evil. For the little strength which is left to it is like a spark left in ashes. The spark is natural reason, which is enveloped in darkness, having still the power of discerning good and evil, and the difference between truth and falsehood, while it is impotent to perform that which it approves, and possesses neither the full light of truth nor the power over its own affections.

3. And so it is, O my God, that *I delight in Thy Law after the inward man*², knowing that Thy Law must be *holy and just and good*, feeling deeply also that all sin and evil ought to be shunned; yet *with the flesh I serve the law of sin*, so long as I obey the temptations of sense rather than the dictates of reason. Hence it is, that *to will what is good is present with me, but how to perform it I find not*. Hence I often propose to myself many good ends; but, because Grace is wanting to assist my infirmity, the slightest opposition defeats me and drives me back. Hence it comes to pass, that I know the way of perfection, and see clearly what I ought to do; but, pressed down by my own corruption, I do not rise to the more perfect way.

4. O how entirely necessary is Thy grace, Lord, to enable me to begin any good thing, to carry it on, to bring it to perfection! For without it I can do nothing: but *I can do all things through Thy grace strengthening me*³. O truly heavenly grace, without which we have no merits of our own, without which no gifts of nature are worthy of being esteemed! Skill is worth nothing, riches are worth nothing, strength and beauty are worth nothing, cleverness and eloquence are worth nothing, in Thy sight, O Lord,

¹ Gen. viii. 21.² Rom. vii. 22, 23, 18.³ Phil. iv. 13.

without grace. For the gifts of nature are common to good men and bad alike; but that grace or love, which is the mark of those who are deemed worthy of eternal life, is a gift to the elect alone. So pre-eminent is this gift of grace, that neither prophecy, nor the working of miracles, nor the power of deepest speculation are of any value without it. Neither Faith, nor Hope, nor any other virtues are accepted with Thee without Grace and Charity.

5. O most blessed Grace, making the poor in spirit rich in virtues, and rendering the rich in this world's goods humble of heart! Come, descend upon me, fill me with Thy consolation and that soon, lest my soul faint for weariness and barrenness of mind. I beseech Thee, O Lord, *let me find grace in Thy sight*¹; for *Thy grace is sufficient for me*², though I be deprived of other things, which nature craves. If I be tempted and vexed with divers tribulations, I will fear no evils, while Thy grace is with me. It alone is my strength, it alone supplies me with counsel and help. It is more powerful than all enemies, it is wiser than all the wise.

6. Grace is the mistress of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the mind, the consoler of trouble, the destroyer of sadness, the banisher of fear, the nurse of devotion, the source of godly sorrow. What am I without grace, but a dry tree, and a cumberer of the ground? Therefore, *O Lord, I pray Thee that Thy Grace may always prevent and follow me, and make me continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*³.

CHAP. LVI. *THAT WE MUST DENY OURSELVES, AND TAKE UP OUR CROSS AND FOLLOW CHRIST.*

1. "My Son, the more you go out of Self, the more you will be able to enter into Me. As it tends to peace within to desire nothing in the world without, so separa-

¹ Gen. xviii. 3.

² 2 Cor. xii. 9.

³ Collect for 17th Sunday after Trinity.

tion from self tends to union with God. I wish you to learn to deny yourself completely, when My will requires it, without hesitation or complaint. Follow Me; *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life*¹. Without the *Way*, you cannot go aright; without the *Truth*, you cannot know aright; and without the *Life*, you cannot live aright. *I am the Way*, which you must follow; *the Truth*, which you must believe; *the Life*, for which you must hope. *I am the Way* of safety, *the Truth* infallible, *the Life* eternal. I am the straight *Way*, the supreme *Truth*, the true and blessed and uncreated *Life*. If you abide in My *Way*, you shall know the *Truth*, and the truth shall make you free², and you shall lay hold on eternal *Life*.

2. "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*³."

If thou wilt know the *Truth*, believe in Me. *If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast*³. If thou wilt be My disciple, deny thyself. If thou wilt enjoy the life to come, think not too much of the joys of the life present. If thou wilt be exalted in Heaven, humble thyself in this world. If thou wilt reign with Me, carry the cross with Me: for the servants of the cross alone find the way of blessedness and of true light."

3. O Lord Jesus, forasmuch as Thy life on earth was humble, and despised by the world, grant me grace to imitate Thee, even if the world despise me; *for the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his lord*⁴. Let Thy servant be exercised in a life like Thine, for therein is salvation and true holiness. Anything which lies beyond that I have no right to desire.

4. "My Son, blessed are those, who not only know the way of life, but who do not shrink from following it. *He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him*⁵, and I will cause him to sit with Me in the kingdom of My Father."

¹ S. Joh. xiv. 6.

² S. John viii. 32.

³ S. Matt. xix. 17, 21.

⁴ S. Matt. x. 24.

⁵ S. John xiv. 21.

5. Lord Jesus, as Thou hast said and promised, so be it, and may it be mine to experience the fulfilment. I have received the cross from Thine hand; be it mine to carry it until death. I have begun; I may not go back; I may not lay the cross down.

6. Brethren in Christ, let us go on together; Jesus will be with us. For Jesus' sake we have taken up the cross; for Jesus' sake we will bear it. He will be our helper, who is also our leader and forerunner. Behold, our King goes before us, and He will fight for us. Let us follow manfully, and fear no terrors; let us be prepared to die in the battle bravely, and *let us not stain our honour*¹ by deserting the Cross.

CHAP. LVII. *THAT A MAN MUST NOT BE TOO MUCH CAST DOWN BY THE SENSE OF HIS FAILINGS.*

1. "My Son, patience and humility in adversity are more pleasing to Me than much consolation and devout feeling in prosperity. Why should a small thing spoken against you sadden your heart? If it had been greater, you ought not to have been moved by it. But now let that pass; it is nothing new, it is not the first thing of the kind, nor will it be the last, if you live long. You are manly enough, so long as no trouble oppresses you. You can give good counsel too, and can strengthen others by your words; but when tribulation comes suddenly to your own door, you fail both in counsel and in strength. Observe your great frailty, of which you have so often experience in small matters; yet it is all for your health, when these and the like things happen to you.

2. "Put such things out of your mind, as best you can. And if tribulation come upon you, let it not cast you down, nor trouble you long. At least bear it patiently, if you cannot joyfully. Although you hear what displeases you, and feel indignation, refrain yourself, nor suffer any

¹ 1 Mac. ix. 10.

unruly words to escape your lips, whereby the little ones may be offended. The storm will soon cease, and your inward sorrow will be sweetened when grace returns. I *am alive for evermore*¹, saith the Lord, and am ready to help you, and to comfort you beyond all comfort that you have felt hitherto, if only you trust in Me, and pray to Me earnestly.

3. "Be more steady in mind, and gird yourself to greater endurance. All is not lost, because you find yourself frequently in tribulation, or sorely tried. You are man, not God; you are flesh, not an angel. How can you always remain in the same spiritual state, when an angel in Heaven and the first man in Paradise alike failed? I am He, who comforts the mourners, and causes those chiefly to grow in grace who most know their own infirmity."

4. Lord, blessed be Thy word; it is sweeter to my mouth *than honey and the honeycomb*². What could I do in my troubles, unless Thou didst strengthen me with Thy sacred words? And if only I arrive at the gate of salvation, what matter will it be what and how much I may have suffered on the road? Grant me a blessed end, grant me a happy departure from this world! Remember me, O my God, for good, and keep me in the right way which leads to Thy kingdom. Amen.

CHAP. LVIII. *THAT THE DEEP THINGS OF
GOD AND HIS SECRET JUDGMENTS ARE
NOT TO BE SCANNED TOO NARROWLY.*

I. "My Son, beware how you dispute concerning deep matters, and concerning the secret judgments of God: why this man seems to be deserted, and that man to receive grace so abundantly; why this man is so afflicted, and that man made so prosperous. Such things pass all human power of comprehension, nor is any reasoning or disputation sufficient to discuss the judgments of God. When therefore the enemy suggests such things to you,

¹ Rev. i. 13.

² Ps. xix. 10.

or even when inquisitive men raise the question, answer in the words of the Prophet: *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and true is Thy judgment*¹, or again, *The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether*². My judgments are to be feared, not discussed, because to human intellect they are incomprehensible.

2*. "Beware also of prying too curiously into the mysteries of the world to come, and inquiring who will be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. Such questions are vain and unprofitable; and they are contrary to the spirit of the kingdom of Heaven, which is a kingdom of peace, because it is one of humility, and in it there is no exalting of one above another.

3. "Are not all the Saints in Heaven Mine? Did not I give them grace? Did not I raise them to glory? I knew them when on earth; *I prevented them with the blessings of goodness*³; I foreknew My elect from everlasting; *I chose them out of the world*⁴; they did not choose Me, but I chose them. I called them by My grace; I drew them by My mercy; I led them safe through divers trials. I poured into their hearts abundant consolations; I gave them power to persevere to the end; I crowned their patience.

4. "I know who is first and who is last; I embrace all in My infinite love. I am to be praised in all My Saints; I am to be blessed above all, and honoured in each of those, whom I have predestinated and glorified without any merits of their own. Therefore he who despises one of the least of My little ones does not honour aright the great ones; *for I have made the small and great, and care for all alike*⁵. And he who despises the least of My Saints despises Me. All Mine are one in the bond of love; they love the same thing, they wish the same thing, and all love each other as members of one body.

5. "And (which is still more important) they love Me

¹ Ps. cxix. 137.

² Ps. xix. 9.

³ Ps. xxi. 3.

⁴ S. John xv. 19.

⁵ Wisd. vi. 7.

more than themselves and their own doings. For being raised above self, and drawn beyond the limits of self-love, they are wholly absorbed in love of Me, in whom they rest and find peace. There is nothing which can separate them from Me or trouble them, because they are full of eternal truth and they glow with the warmth of inextinguishable love. Therefore let all those, who have not yet learned to love anything beyond their own private gratifications, abstain from discussing the condition of Saints departed.

6. "There is much ignorance of spiritual things, especially in the hearts of those, who, being but little enlightened, are unable to love any one with perfect spiritual love. In this world men are swayed much by natural affection and by human friendship this way and that; and they fancy that they may do in heavenly matters that which they do in worldly. But there is an enormous difference between those things which men imagine by the light of nature, and those things which men whose minds are enlightened by the Spirit are able to see through the revelation granted them from above.

7. "Beware therefore, My Son, of inquiring curiously into things which surpass your powers of knowledge, but rather give all diligence to be found (though it be the very least) in the kingdom of God. And if any one would know whether this Saint be greater than that, or who is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, let him consider what profit such knowledge would be to him, unless it led him to humble himself before Me, and to praise My Name more abundantly. He is far more acceptable to God, who is persuaded of the greatness of his own sins and the unworthiness of his own best deeds, and his distance from perfection, than he who discusses the greatness or smallness of others.

8. "The Saints in glory need not that men upon earth should discuss their condition. They glory not in their own merits, they ascribe no virtue to themselves, but all

to Me, who of My own infinite love have given them all things. They are so filled with divine love and with joy unspeakable, that no glory is wanting to them, and no increase of happiness conceivable. The higher the Saints are in glory, so much the deeper are they in humility, and so much the nearer and dearer to Me. And so it is that you find it written, that *they cast down their crowns before the throne, and fall down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever*¹.

9. "Many ask, who is the greatest in the kingdom of God, while they know not whether they themselves are worthy to be reckoned even with the least. It is a great thing to be even the least in Heaven, where all are great, because all are called, and all are Sons of God. *A little one shall become a thousand, but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed*². For when the disciples asked, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?* they received such an answer as this: *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven*³.

10. "Woe to them who refuse to humble themselves as little children; because the gate of Heaven is low and will not admit them. *Woe also to the rich, who have received their consolation*⁴ here; for, when the poor enter the kingdom of Heaven, they will stand outside the doors. Rejoice ye humble, and exult ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God, if only ye walk in the ways of truth."

CHAP. LIX. THAT ALL HOPE AND TRUST IS TO BE FIXED IN GOD ALONE.

1. LORD, what trust can I have in this present life, or what comfort from visible things? Art not Thou my trust,

¹ Rev. iv. 10.

² S. Matt. xviii. 1. 3, 4.

³ Isai. lx. 22. lxx. 20.

⁴ S. Luke vi. 24.

O Lord my God, of whose mercy there is no end? Where has it ever been well with me without Thee? Or could it ever go ill with me, when Thou wast present? I had rather be poor for Thy sake, than rich without Thee. I had rather be a wanderer upon earth with Thee, than without Thee possess the whole Heaven. Where Thou art, there is Heaven; and Death and Hell are there, where Thou art not. Thou art my desire; and therefore for Thee must I call and sigh and make my prayer. I can put trust in none that is able to help in trouble, save in Thee, my God, alone. Thou art my hope, Thou my trust, Thou my comforter and in all things most faithful.

2. All seek their own; Thou seekest my profit and salvation only, and makest all things work together for good. Though Thou permittest me to be exposed to divers trials and adversities, Thou ordainest the whole for my advantage, Thou who in a thousand ways art wont to prove those whom Thou lovest. And when Thou provest Thou deservest to be loved and praised, as much as when Thou fillest me with heavenly consolations.

3. In Thee therefore, O Lord God, I place all my hope and refuge; upon Thee I throw all my tribulation and trouble; for as often as I look upon myself out of Thee, I find myself altogether weak and unstable. For many friends will not profit me, neither will the powerful be able to protect me, nor prudent counsellors set me at ease, nor the books of the learned comfort me, nor any earthly price purchase my liberty, nor any secret place hide me, if Thou Thyself dost not stand by me, assist, strengthen, comfort, teach, and guard me.

4. For all things, which seem to tend to peace and happiness, are nothing without Thy presence, and in reality convey no happiness. Therefore Thou Thyself art the end of all good, and higher than all that belongs to this life, and deeper than all words can express; and the highest privilege of Thy servants is to place their

whole trust in Thee. *Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes*¹, in Thee I trust, O my God, Father of all mercies.


5. Bless and sanctify my soul with heavenly benediction, that it may become Thy holy habitation, and the seat of Thine eternal glory; and let nothing be found in this Temple of Thine honour, which can offend the eyes of Thy Majesty. *According to the greatness of Thy goodness, and the multitude of Thy mercies, look upon me,* and hear the prayer of Thy poor servant, who has long been an exile in the valley of the shadow of death. Protect and preserve the soul of Thy servant in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, and by Thy grace preventing me guide me in the way of peace to the land of perpetual light. Amen.

¹ Ps. cxxiii. 1.

BOOK IV.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

CHAP. I. THE REVERENCE WITH WHICH THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST ARE TO BE RECEIVED.

OME unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you¹, saith the Lord. The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world². Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me³. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life⁴.

2. These are Thy words, O Christ, Eternal truth; Thy words, though not spoken all at one time, nor written all in one place. And because they are Thine and are true, therefore they are all to be received joyfully and with a believing heart. They are Thine, for Thou hast spoken them; they are mine too, for Thou didst utter them for my sake. I willingly receive them from Thy mouth, that they may be planted deeply in my heart. Words of such exceeding holiness, so full of gentleness and love, move me; yet my own sins frighten me, and my sense of unworthiness makes me hesitate to receive so

¹ S. Matt. xi. 28.

² S. Matt. xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. xi. 24.

³ S. John vi. 51.

⁴ S. John vi. 55, 63.

great a mystery. The gentleness of Thy word invites me, but the burden of my sins oppresses me.

3. Thou commandest me to come to Thee with full assurance of faith, if I would have part with Thee; and to receive the food of immortality, if I would obtain eternal life and glory. Thou sayest, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you*¹. O sweet and loving words in the ear of a sinner, where-with Thou invitest the poor and needy to the communion of Thy most blessed body and blood. But what am I, Lord, that I should dare to approach? *The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee*², and yet Thou sayest, *Come ye all unto Me*.

4. What means this most gentle condescension, and kind invitation? How shall I dare to come, who am conscious of no good thing in myself, which could embolden me? How shall I approach so near, who have so often offended Thee? Angels and Archangels are abashed in Thy presence, Saints and Righteous men fear before Thee: and yet Thou sayest, *Come ye all unto Me*. Unless Thou hadst said it Thyself, Lord, who could have believed it to be true? And unless Thou Thyself hadst commanded, who would have ventured to approach?

5. Noah, that just man, laboured for many years in building an ark, that he and his family might be saved. Moses, Thy servant and friend, made an ark of precious wood, and covered it with pure gold that he might place within it the Tables of the Law. Solomon, the wise king of Israel, was seven years in building a magnificent Temple to the praise of Thy Name, and he celebrated the feast of its dedication during eight days: he offered a thousand peace-offerings, and put the ark in the place prepared for it with sound of trumpets and with great joy. But what was the work which all these had to do, compared with that of making ready to receive Thee in Thy Holy Sacrament? and yet I can barely spend one half-hour at my

¹ S. Matt. xi. 28.

² 1 Kings viii. 27.

devotions—O that I could spend but one half-hour as it ought to be spent !

6. O my God, how zealously did these holy men exert themselves to please Thee ! Ah ! how trifling is all that I have ever done ! How short a time do I employ in preparing for Holy Communion ! I seldom find my mind quite collected, very seldom entirely free from all distraction. But surely in the celebration of Thy divine mysteries no improper thought ought to enter, no creature to present itself to my mind, and interfere with my communion with Thee.

7. And yet how wide is the distance between the mysteries of the Old Covenant and the mysteries of the New ! between the sign and the substance ! between the sacrifices of the Law, which were a shadow of good things to come, and the one great sacrifice of the Cross !

8. Why therefore does not the sense of Thy presence move me more deeply ? Why do I not prepare myself with more zeal to receive the holy elements, when those holy patriarchs and prophets of old, kings also and princes with the whole people, shewed so much devotion to Thy service ?

9. King David danced before the ark of God with all his strength, commemorating God's mercies to him and his fathers ; under the influence of the Holy Spirit he gave utterance to his joy and thankfulness in psalms and music ; he taught the people also to praise God with all their heart, and with one voice to bless Him and declare His Name day by day. If such devotion warmed men's hearts in those days, and the praise of God was so declared before the ark of the covenant, what should be my reverence and devotion and that of all Christian people in the celebration of the Holy Sacrament, in the reception of the body and blood of Christ ?

10. O invisible Creator of the world, how wonderful are Thy doings, how kindly dost Thou act towards Thy people, to whom Thou vouchsafest so divine a pledge of

Thy presence! For indeed this holy Sacrament passes human understanding; this above all other things draws towards Thee the hearts of the devout, and inflames their love. And even they who are most earnest in their faith, and who most entirely give themselves up to Thee, do nevertheless often receive from this most blessed ordinance an increase of the spirit of devotion and a deeper love of holiness.

11. O what a wondrous and hidden grace belongs to this Sacrament, which only the faithful can know, which the faithless and those who serve sin can never find! Through it spiritual grace is conferred, holiness is restored, and the soul brought back to its beauty. So great is this grace sometimes, that the frail body seems to participate in the benefits conferred upon the soul and to be itself strengthened and renewed.

12. Yet we must mourn and grieve over our lukewarmness and negligence, because we do not estimate more highly this blessed communion with Christ, upon whom all our hope of salvation depends. For He is our sanctification and redemption; He is the consolation of pilgrims in this world, and the eternal joy of Saints. And it is much to be lamented, that many should think so little of this salutary mystery, in which Heaven rejoices, and the whole earth is blessed. Alas for the blindness and hardness of the human heart, which does not think more of so unspeakable a gift, and which in many cases neglects it altogether!

13. For if this most holy Sacrament could be celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by only one priest throughout the whole world, with what feelings would men regard that one place and that one priest, and with what zeal would they attend the celebration of the divine mysteries! But as it is, Christ's priests are many and the holy Sacrament is celebrated throughout the world, for a testimony to the greatness of God's grace and His love towards man. Thanks be therefore to Thee, O

blessed Jesus, the Good Shepherd of our souls, who hast condescended to refresh us poor wanderers with Thy precious body and blood, and to invite us to these holy mysteries with Thine own mouth, saying: *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you*¹.

CHAP. II. *THAT THE GREAT GOODNESS
AND LOVE OF GOD ARE EXHIBITED TO
MAN IN THE HOLY SACRAMENT.*

1. RELYING upon Thy goodness and great mercy, O Lord, I come, as weak to Him who is mighty to save, as hungry and thirsty to the fountain of life, as poor to the King of Heaven, as a servant to his master, as a creature to his Creator, as desolate to my own kind comforter. But whence is this to me that Thou shouldest thus come to me? What am I that Thou shouldest grant me such communion? How dare a sinner like myself appear before Thee? And how canst Thou condescend to come to me a sinner? Thou knowest Thy servant, and Thou knowest that there is no good thing in him, deserving of such favour. Therefore I confess my vileness, I acknowledge Thy goodness, I praise Thy mercy, and I give thanks for Thy exceeding love. For Thou doest this for Thine own Name's sake, not for any merits of mine, to the end that Thy goodness towards me may be the more apparent, Thy love more abundantly poured forth, Thy condescension more thoroughly commended to my heart. Therefore, since it is Thy pleasure, and Thou hast commanded it to be so, Thy condescension pleaseth me also; and O that my iniquities may not prove an obstacle to the communication of Thy grace!

2. O most gentle and loving Jesus, what reverence and thanksgiving with perpetual praise are due to Thee for the gift of Thy most precious body and blood! What should be my thoughts in this holy Communion, this near

¹ S. Matt. xi. 28.

approach to my Lord, whom I cannot venerate as I ought, and whom yet I desire with all devotion to receive? What thought can I have better and more wholesome, than that of humbling myself entirely in Thy sight, and exalting Thine infinite goodness? I will praise Thee, O my God, and will magnify Thee for ever. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

3. Behold, Thou art the Holy of Holies, and I the sinner of sinners. Behold, Thou stoopest to me, who am not worthy to look up to Thee. Behold, Thou comest to me; Thou consentest to be with me; Thou invitest me to Thy feast. Thou art willing to give me food from Heaven, and *the bread of Angels to eat*¹: yea to give me Thyself, *the bread of God, which came down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world*².

4. Whence comes this love! What marvellous condescension is here! What thanks and praises are due to Thee for these benefits! O how great was Thy mercy and goodwill in instituting this holy Mystery! How happy is the feast, in which Thou givest Thyself as the food! O how wonderful are Thy works, O Lord, how mighty Thy operations, how infallible Thy truth! For Thou spakest the word and all things were done³; and this also was done, because Thou commandedst it.

5. It is a wonderful thing, and past human powers of comprehension, that Thou, Lord, shouldest thus give Thyself for the food of the world. Thou who art the Lord of all condescendest thus to come and dwell in us: O keep my soul and my body spotless, that with a pure and joyful conscience I may more frequently be able to celebrate Thy mysteries, and to receive to my endless comfort the memorial which Thou hast instituted of Thyself.

6. Rejoice, O my soul, and give thanks to God for so glorious a gift and so singular a consolation granted to thee in this vale of tears. For as often as thou celebratest this mystery and receivest the body and blood of Christ,

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 25, 26. ² S. Joh. vi. 33, 41. ³ Ps. cxlviii. 5.

so often thou shewest forth the work of Thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the benefits of Christ's passion. For the love of Christ never wanes, and the greatness of His propitiation is never exhausted. Therefore thou shouldst ever dispose thyself to this mystery with new purpose of heart, and consider ever with new attention the great mystery of salvation. And the work of Christ should appear to thee in the celebration of the Holy Sacrament as great, as fresh, as glorious, as if then for the first time Christ had become man in the womb of the blessed Virgin, or then hanging upon the cross suffered and died for the salvation of man.

CHAP. III. ON THE BENEFIT OF FREQUENT COMMUNION.

1. BEHOLD, Lord, I come to Thee, that it may be well with me according to Thy bounty, and that I may rejoice in Thy Holy Feast, which *Thou of Thy goodness hast prepared for the poor*¹. In Thee is all that I can and ought to desire; Thou art my salvation and redemption, my hope and my strength, my honour and glory. *Comfort Thou therefore this day the soul of Thy servant, for unto Thee, O LORD JESUS, do I lift up my soul*². My soul desires to be fed with Thy body and blood, my heart longs to be united with Thee.

2. Give Thyself to me, and it is enough: for beside Thee there is no consolation. Without Thee I cannot live. And therefore I would often come to Thee, and receive the heavenly food and the medicine which my health requires, lest perchance *I faint in the way*. For so, O most merciful Lord Jesus, when preaching to the people and healing their infirmities, Thou saidst: *I will not send them away fasting to their houses, lest they faint in the way*³. Deal therefore thus with me in Thy most holy Sacrament. For Thou art the sweet refreshment of my

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 10.

² Ps. lxxxvi. 4.

³ S. Matt. xv. 32. S. Mark viii. 3.

soul; and he who worthily eateth Thee is the heir of eternal glory.

3. Truly it is necessary for me, who offend so often, who am so frail and full of infirmity, by frequent confession and prayer and Holy Communion to refresh and purify myself and to warm my affections; lest by neglect of the means I fall away from grace. For *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*¹; and unless succoured by divine medicine, man soon falls from bad to worse. Therefore Holy Communion restrains from evil, and confirms in good. For if now I find myself so negligent and lukewarm, what would become of me, if I were without the medicine, and neglected so great an aid? And although I be not always in a frame of mind which befits a communicant, yet I will strive to be frequent in my participation of the holy mysteries, and so to become a recipient of Thy grace. For this is one great consolation of the faithful soul, as long as it makes its pilgrimage apart from Thee in its mortal body, that it can receive with devout mind the memorials of Thy love.

4. O marvellous condescension of Thy mercy towards us, that Thou, O Lord God, the Creator and Life of all spirits, shouldest deign to visit each poor soul, and supply its hunger with Thy divine and human nature! Happy is the mind, blessed the soul, which is able thus to receive Thee devoutly, and in receiving Thee to be filled with spiritual joy! O how great a privilege to enter into communion with Thee, the faithful friend, the heavenly bridegroom, the chiefest among ten thousand, the ~~elo~~together lovely! Let heaven and earth and all the glory of them hide their faces and keep silence before Thee, O my Beloved; for whatever of praise and honour belongs to them, comes from Thy bounty and condescension, and adds nothing to the glory of Thy Name, *whose power is great and whose wisdom is infinite*².

¹ Gen. viii. 21.

² Ps. cxlvii. 5.

CHAP. IV. ON THE BENEFITS RECEIVED
BY DEVOUT COMMUNICANTS.

1. O LORD my God, *prevent* Thy servant *with the blessings of Thy Goodness*¹, that I may be able to come worthily and devoutly to Thy great Sacrament. Stir up my heart within me, and deliver me from slothfulness and heaviness. *Visit me with Thy salvation*², that I may spiritually taste Thy sweetness, which flows abundantly from this Sacrament as from a living fountain. Lighten my eyes also that I may behold so great a mystery, and strengthen me to believe in it with undoubting faith. For it is Thy work, and no human power; Thy sacred ordinance, not the invention of man. And indeed no one can be fit to comprehend and understand this mystery, which surpasses the power of angels. What therefore can I, an unworthy sinner, who am but dust and ashes, search out and comprehend of so holy and deep a secret?

2. Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, in firm faith, and at Thy command, I come to Thee with hope and reverence; and I believe verily that Thou art present in this Sacrament, both God and man. Thy will is therefore that I should receive Thee, and join myself to Thee in the bonds of love. Wherefore I beseech Thy mercy, and implore of Thee to grant me Thy special grace, that I may wholly give myself to Thee and be penetrated by Thy love, and may no longer seek consolation in any but Thee. For this most high and most worthy Sacrament is health both to body and soul, the medicine of all spiritual sickness; in it my vices are cured, my passions bridled, my temptations subdued or lessened, greater grace infused, holiness increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and love inflamed.

3. Many are the good things which Thou hast given and still givest in this Holy Sacrament to devout communicants, O my God, Supporter of my soul, Healer of

¹ Ps. xxi. 3.² Ps. cvi. 4.

human infirmity, and Giver of all consolation. For Thou pourest into their minds comfort against tribulation, and from the depth of their own dejection Thou raisest them up to the hope of Thy protection, and refreshest and enlightenest them within with new supplies of grace; so that they, who before Communion have felt their minds troubled and their hearts cold, afterwards, refreshed with the heavenly food, find themselves changed into new men. And this Thou doest for Thine elect, in order that they may know of a truth, and be assured by experience, how great is their own infirmity, and what grace and blessing they can obtain of Thee: for being in themselves cold, hard-hearted, unfit for devotion, they become by Thy grace fervent, active, and devout. For who, that comes to the fountain in humility, does not carry away some of its sweet waters? Or who, that stands near the fire, does not receive warmth? And Thou art the ever full and abundant fountain, Thou the fire which ever burns and never fails!

4. Wherefore, if I may not drink from the fulness of the fountain, nor completely quench my thirst, I will yet put my mouth to the heavenly stream, that at least I may be refreshed with a few drops and not be utterly dried up. And, if I cannot as yet be wholly spiritualized, and if my heart cannot be inflamed like those of Cherubin and Seraphin, I will yet strive to be earnest in my devotion, and so to prepare my heart that I may receive at least a slight spark of the divine fire by humble reception of this life-giving Sacrament. And whatever is lacking in me, O most holy Saviour, most loving Jesus, do Thou supply by Thy grace and goodness, who hast condescended to call all men unto Thee, saying: *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you*¹.

5. I truly labour in the sweat of my brow, I am tortured with pain of heart, I am burdened with sins, I am disquieted by temptations, I am entangled and oppressed by many evil passions; and there is no one who can help

¹ S. Matt. xi. 28.

me, no one who can deliver and save me, but Thou, O Lord God, my Saviour, to whom I commit myself and all that is mine, that Thou mayest help me and bring me safe to life eternal. Receive me to the praise and glory of Thy Name, Who hast given Thy body and blood for my meat and drink. And grant, Lord, that in the frequent reception of Thy holy mysteries the warmth of my devotion may increase.

CHAP. V. *ON THE DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT, AND THE CORRESPONDING DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE.*

1. "If you had the purity of an angel, and the sanctity of John the Baptist, you would still be unworthy of receiving or of administering this Holy Sacrament. For it is beyond the merit of man to become fit to consecrate the sacrament of Christ, and to receive the food of angels. Great is the dignity of the priestly office, which even the angels do not discharge. For the priests in Christ's Church are appointed to consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ. The priest is God's Minister, using God's words according to God's own command and institution: God Himself is really the unseen worker of all; it is He who speaks the word, and all creatures which He commands obey.

2. "Therefore in this most holy Sacrament you should trust wholly in God, and approach with reverence and fear. If you are yourself a Priest, remember that you have been so made by God, and that it is your duty to minister before Him faithfully and devoutly, and to keep yourself pure. You above all men are bound to holy living and high perfection of sanctity. The priest ought to be adorned with every virtue, and to be a pattern to others of a godly life. His conversation must not be in the common high way of men, but with Angels in Heaven and Saints on earth.

3. "The Priest who ministers ministers for Christ, and offers up prayers to God on behalf of himself and of the

whole congregation. The purity of his robes is the type of the inward purity of heart, which ought to belong to him who is permitted to minister before God in such high mysteries; and the honour which God has put upon him by conferring upon him such an office should excite him to diligence in declaring to his brethren God's love and grace towards them in this Holy Sacrament, in the celebration of which he has this singular privilege, that he at once gives honour to God, joy to Angels, and the means of grace to man."

CHAP. VI. *PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.*

1. WHEN I consider Thy greatness, Lord, and my own unworthiness, I tremble exceedingly, and am covered with confusion. For if I do not go to Thy Table, I deprive myself of the bread of life; and if I go unworthily, I incur condemnation. What therefore shall I do, Lord, Thou who art my helper and counsellor in time of need?

2. Do Thou teach me the right way; help me to prepare myself suitably for Holy Communion. For I would fain know in what way I may most devoutly and most reverently make ready my heart to receive Thy blessed Sacrament to the strengthening and refreshing of my soul.

CHAP. VII. *ON THE EXAMINATION OF THE CONSCIENCE, AND RESOLUTIONS OF AMENDMENT.*

1. "ABOVE all things it is necessary that you should approach this Holy Sacrament with full faith and pious intention of honouring God. Examine your conscience diligently, and to the utmost of your power purify and cleanse it by true contrition and humble confession of sin; so that you may be conscious of no fault which may reproach you and hinder you from free access. Sorrow over your sins in general, and specially grieve and lament over your daily short-comings: and if possible confess to God in the secret of your heart all the miseries of your lusts and passions.

2. "Grieve and lament, that you are still so carnal and worldly; so unmortified to lusts and passions; so full of the motions of concupiscence; so unguarded in your feelings; so often entangled by vain fancies; so much given to outward things, so negligent of things within; so easily moved to laughter and gaiety, so hardly to tears and contrition; so ready to consult the comfort of the flesh, so slow to that which requires earnestness and self-denial; so anxious to see and hear what is new or beautiful, so backward to what is lowly and humble; so desirous of possessing, so niggardly in giving, so close in holding; so inconsiderate in speaking, so unwilling to be silent; so thoughtful concerning food for the body, so deaf to the Word of God; so quick to take your rest, so slow to labour; so contriving when your own pleasure is concerned, so awkward when the service of God; so negligent concerning the public worship of the Church, so lukewarm in prayer and Communion; so easily distracted, so seldom thoroughly collected; so suddenly excited to anger, so ready to take offence; so prone to judge your neighbour, so severe to reprove; so joyful in prosperity, so depressed in adversity; so often making good resolutions, and so seldom putting them earnestly in practice.

3. "When you have confessed and deplored these and other defects with shame and sorrow, make a firm resolution of amending your life and doing better for the future. Then with full resignation, and the entire consent of your will, offer yourself up to the honour of My Name upon the altar of your heart as a whole burnt-offering, and so give your soul and body to Me: this is the best preparation for coming worthily to My altar and receiving to your soul's health the Sacrament of My body and blood.

4. "For there is no offering more worthy and acceptable, than when a man offers up himself to God without reserve in the service of Holy Communion. If any one does this so far as in him lies, and repents truly of all his sins, then as often as he comes for grace and pardon he

shall hear such words as these, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should be converted and live*¹; and again, *his sins and iniquities will I remember no more*²."

CHAP. VIII. ON THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST
UPON THE CROSS, AND ON SELF-REDEMPTION.

1. "As I offered Myself, with hands stretched out a body bare upon the Cross, freely for your sins to God my Father, so that nothing was left to Me, but all given as a sacrifice of divine propitiation, so ought you to offer yourself to Me willingly as a pure and holy oblation. Will I more do I require of you, than that you should be ready to resign yourself wholly to Me? I care nothing for a offering you may make beside your own self; I seek gift at your hands, but I seek you.

2. "As it would not profit you to possess all things and lose Me; so neither can anything which you give please Me, if you do not offer yourself. Offer yourself to Me, and give yourself wholly to God; that will be acceptable oblation. Lo, I offered Myself wholly to my Father for your sake; and I have given My Body and Blood for your food, that I might be wholly yours, and you Mine. But if the love of self remains, and you do not give yourself up freely to My will, the offering is incomplete, nor will the union betwixt us be entire. Therefore the willing sacrifice of yourself to God must be the foundation of all your deeds, if you would obtain grace and freedom. And indeed it is because men do not entirely deny self, that so few are able to walk in light and liberty. The sentence cannot be reversed: *Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple*. If therefore you desire to be My disciple, offer yourself to Me with all your thoughts and all your affections."

¹ Ezek. xxxiii. 11. xviii. 23. ² Heb. x. 17. ³ S. Luke xiv. 33

CHAP. IX. *THAT WE OUGHT TO OFFER UP
TO GOD OURSELVES AND ALL THAT WE
HAVE, AND TO MAKE SUPPLICATION
FOR ALL MEN.*

1. O LORD, *Thine are all things, which are in heaven and which are in earth*¹. I desire to offer myself up a willing sacrifice to Thee, and to continue Thine for ever. O Lord, I offer myself up this day *in the uprightness of my heart*² to be Thy servant, to yield Thee obedience and the sacrifice of perpetual praise. Receive me as an oblation, in the commemoration of the great sacrifice.

2. O Lord, I offer up to Thee all my sins and faults, which I have committed in Thy sight and that of Thy holy Angels, from the day when I first was capable of sin to this present time; that Thou mayest burn and consume them with the fire of Thy love, and expunge all the spots of my sins, and cleanse my conscience from every fault, and restore to me Thy grace which I have lost by my transgressions, and freely forgive me all, and grant me Thy peace.

3. What can I do for the purification of my sins, except confess them humbly and grieve over them, and continually ask Thy pardon? This I do ask; graciously hear me when I come into Thy presence, O my God. All my sins are hateful to me; I desire never to commit them again; but I grieve over them, and will grieve as long as I live, and endeavour to do works meet for repentance. Forgive me, O God, forgive me my sins, for Thy holy Name's sake; save my soul, which Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood. Behold, I commit myself to Thy mercy, I resign myself into Thy hands. *Deal with me according to Thy goodness, not according to my sins and iniquities*³.

4. I offer to Thee also all my good deeds, however few and imperfect, that Thou mayest purify and sanctify them; that Thou mayest approve them, and make them acceptable

¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 11. ² 1 Chron. xxix. 17. ³ Ps. cxix. 124. cill. 10.

to Thyself, and cause them to lead to better deeds still and that Thou mayest bring me, weak and unprofitable as I am, to a blessed and happy end.

5. I offer to Thee besides the needs of all my relations and friends, my brothers, sisters, and all those dear to me and of those who for love of Thee have been kind to myself or to others, of those too who desire my prayers: that they all may experience the aid of Thy grace, the assistance of Thy consolation, protection from dangers, and freedom from Thy displeasure; and that, being delivered from a evil, they may with joy return to Thee their heartfelt thanks.

6. Finally, I offer to Thee my prayers specially for those, who in anything have injured me, or been unkind to me, or spoken evil of me, or caused me any loss or trouble; for all those too, whom at any time I have injured, or troubled, or vexed, or offended, by word or deed knowingly or otherwise; that Thou wouldest grant equally to us all pardon of our sins, and our offenses against each other. Remove, O Lord, from our hearts all suspicious indignation, anger, and quarrel, and whatsoever can interfere with charity, and lessen brotherly love. Have mercy have mercy, O Lord, upon those who ask mercy at Thy hand; give Thy grace to those who are in need of it; and cause us to be such, that we may be accounted worthy of Thy favour and may come to eternal life. Amen.

CHAP. X. *THAT THE HOLY COMMUNION IS NOT LIGHTLY TO BE NEGLECTED.*

1. "You must go frequently to the Fountain of grace and divine mercy, to the Fountain of goodness and purity; this is the way in which your passions and vices must be cured, and in which you must become stronger and more watchful against all the temptations and wiles of the devil. The enemy, knowing the advantage and the healing power which is in Holy Communion, will strive in every manner and by all means to keep back from it, as much as he can, the faithful and devout.

2. "Indeed some have found, that when they endeavour to prepare themselves for Holy Communion they then experience the worst attacks of Satan. The evil spirit (as is written in the book of Job) comes amongst the sons of God, that he may disturb them by his malice, or render them timid and perplexed, that he may diminish the warmth of their love, or shake their faith, so that he may make them give up Holy Communion altogether, or at least make them lukewarm in their attendance. But you must not give heed to his subtleties and suggestions, which are vile and abominable, but rather hurl back his lies at his own head. You must learn to despise him and his miserable efforts, and by no means allow the attacks which he makes upon you to keep you from Holy Communion.

3. "Often also there is another cause which impedes men in Holy Communion, namely, a too great anxiety concerning the state of their feelings and a fear that their minds are not sufficiently devout. But in this matter take counsel from those wiser than yourself, and set aside all anxiety and scruples, because these do in fact hinder the grace of God and interfere with devotion. Do not omit Holy Communion because your mind may chance to be somewhat troubled and oppressed; but rather confess your condition heartily before Almighty God, and forgive freely all who have in any way offended you. And if you have offended any one, ask pardon humbly, and God will forgive you all your sins.

4. "Why defer repentance, or put off attendance at the Holy Communion? Purge yourself at once, get rid of the poison quickly, hasten to receive the medicine, and it will be better for you than if you delay. If there be a hindrance to-day, perchance there may be a greater one to-morrow; and so you may long be kept away from Holy Communion, and may become less earnest about it. As quickly as you can, shake off your present sloth and inactivity; for it is of no use to be a long while in doubt, to be a long while perplexed, and to be kept back day after

day by obstacles from the participation of Divine mysteries. Indeed it is very mischievous to delay Communion; for delay usually induces torpor and coldness. Alas, it is too true, that many allow themselves in excuses for putting off solemn preparation, and therefore putting off the Holy Communion itself, because they do not like to bind themselves to greater circumspection of conduct.

5. "O how little love and how lukewarm a spirit of devotion must they have, who so easily put off Holy Communion! How happy is he, and how acceptable to God, who so lives, and keeps his conscience in such a condition of purity, that he is never unprepared for joining in Holy Communion! There may be sometimes good reasons for abstinence, and humility and reverence may sometimes keep a man away; but if coldness and torpor be creeping over the soul, a man must exert himself and do his best to rouse himself; and the Lord will be with him, and help him according to the desire of his heart.

6. "And when a person is prevented from communicating by any lawful impediment, the possession of the right intention and desire will prevent him from losing the benefits which the Holy Sacrament conveys. For the devout Christian can come every day and every hour without hindrance and to his soul's health to the spiritual Communion of Christ; and yet on certain days and at appointed times, he ought to receive sacramentally with affectionate reverence the Body and Blood of the Redeemer, and think more in doing so of the praise and honour of God than of obtaining consolation for himself. For he communicates mystically, and is refreshed invisibly, as often as he meditates devoutly upon the mystery of the Incarnation and the Passion of Christ, and is moved by the sense of His Love.

7.* "He who does not prepare himself, except when some great festival is at hand or custom compels him, will be very often unprepared. Happy is he, who offers himself up a living sacrifice to God, as often as he communi-

cates! Happy is he, whose ordinary life is such as never to make him unfit for presenting himself before God in the celebration of this Holy Sacrament!"

CHAP. XI. *THAT THE BODY OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST AND HOLY SCRIPTURE
ARE PRIME NECESSARIES OF THE
FAITHFUL SOUL.*

1. O MOST blessed Lord Jesus, how great is the delight of the devout soul which feasts with Thee in Thy heavenly banquet, where the food is no other than Thyself, the only beloved and the desired beyond all the desires of the heart! And indeed it would be sweet to shed tears in Thy presence from deep love towards Thee, and like Mary to wash Thy feet with tears. But where is this devotion? where this abundant effusion of holy tears? Certainly in sight of Thee and of Thy holy angels my whole heart ought to be inflamed, and to weep for joy; for in Thy Holy Sacrament Thou Thyself art mystically present.

2. For in Thine own Divine brightness my eyes could not bear to see Thee; nor could the world itself endure the glory of Thy Majesty. Hence in condescension to our weakness Thou art sacramentally present. I am able to adore Thee, whom the Angels adore in Heaven; I by faith, they by sight. And I must be content to walk in the light of a true faith, until *the day of eternal brightness breaks and the shadows flee away*¹. But when that which is perfect is come², sacraments will cease, because the blessed in glory need no sacramental communion. For they rejoice for ever in the presence of God, beholding His glory face to face; and being transformed *from glory to glory*³, they are fed by the word of God which was made flesh, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be.

3. When I think upon these wonderful revelations everything else seems to lose its interest for me; because, so long as I cannot see my Lord in His glory, all that I

¹ Cant. ii. 17.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

see and hear in the world is as nothing. Thou art my witness, O God, that no earthly thing can comfort me, no creature give me rest, but only Thyself, O my God, whom I continually desire to see. But this cannot be, so long as I remain in this mortal life. Therefore it becomes me to be patient, and to submit myself to Thee in every thought and desire. For the saints, O Lord, who now reign with Thee in the kingdom of Heaven, waited for the coming of Thy glory, while they were in the flesh, in faith and great patience. What they believed, that I also believe; what they hoped, that I also hope; whither they have arrived, thither I trust that through Thy grace I also shall come. Meanwhile I will walk in faith, and take comfort in the example of those who have gone before me. I will take the sacred books too for my comfort and for a mirror to shew me my life, and the Sacrament of Thy most blessed body and blood for my especial remedy and refuge.

4. For two things there are which I find to be especially necessary to me in this life, and without which life would be insupportable: confined as I am in the prison of this body, there are two things which I need, namely, food and light. Therefore Thou hast given me Thy body and blood for the strengthening and refreshing of my soul, and Thou hast put *Thy Word as a lantern to my feet*¹. Without these two I cannot well live; for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the bread of life. These may be called the *two tables*, placed on the one side and on the other in the *treasury* of Thy Holy Church². The one table is that of Thine holy altar, which bears the consecrated bread, that is, the precious body of Christ; the other is that of the Divine Law, containing holy doctrine, teaching a true faith, and conducting safely within the veil, where is the Holy of Holies.

5. Thanks be to Thee, O Lord Jesus, Light of eternal Light, for the table of sacred doctrine, which Thou hast

¹ Ps. cxix. 105.

² Cf. Ezek. xl. 39.

prepared for us by Thy servants the Prophets and Apostles and Evangelists. Thanks to Thee, Creator and Redeemer of mankind, who, to declare Thy love to the whole world, hast prepared a great supper, in which Thou hast provided not the typical Lamb of the old covenant, but Thy most holy Body and Blood; cheering the minds of the faithful with the holy banquet, and making glad their hearts with the cup of salvation, in which are all the delights of Paradise, and in which Angels banquet in our company, but with still deeper joy.

6. O how great and honourable is the office of those who are called to minister in these holy mysteries! O how pure ought to be the hands, how clean the mouth, how undefiled the body, how spotless the heart, of those whose priestly office brings them so near to Thee! Surely nothing but what is holy, nothing but what is honest and of good report, should ever proceed from the mouth of a priest, which so often receives into it the Sacrament of Christ.

7. The eyes of the Priest should be full of holiness and modesty; those hands should be pure and ever raised up to Heaven, which are accustomed to handle the sacred elements. To Priests it may be especially said, *Be ye holy, because I the Lord your God am holy*¹.

8. May Thy grace, O Almighty God, assist all those who have received the priestly office in Thy Church, that they may be able to serve worthily and devoutly before Thee in all purity and with a good conscience. And if there be any who walk not in true innocence of life, grant them grace to weep over the sins which they have committed, and in the spirit of humility and earnest purpose to serve Thee better for the time to come.

¹ Lev. xix. 2.

CHAP. XII. ON THE DILIGENCE WITH
WHICH A CHRISTIAN SHOULD PREPARE
HIMSELF FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

1. "I AM a lover of purity and the giver of all holiness. I look for a pure heart, and there is *the place of My rest*¹. Make ready for Me a large upper room furnished, and I will eat the Passover at thy house with My disciples². If you desire that I should come to you and abide with you, *purge out the old leaven*³, and cleanse the habitation of your heart. Exclude worldliness and sin; sit like a sparrow alone upon the housetop⁴, and think upon your faults in the bitterness of your soul. For every one who loveth prepares the best and fairest abode for his beloved, and in this manifests the strength of his love.

2. "Remember nevertheless that you cannot make a worthy preparation by virtue of any merits of your own, although you should prepare yourself the whole year round, and have nothing else in your mind. It is of My love and grace alone that you are permitted to come to My Table; as if a beggar were invited to a rich man's feast, and he on his part had no return to make for the kindness except humble thanks. Do therefore what lies in your power, and do it diligently; not from custom, not from necessity; but with reverence and godly fear and love, receive the Body and Blood of your dear Lord who deigns thus to come to you. It is I who have invited you; it is I who have commanded this to be done; I will supply what is lacking: come and receive *Me*.

3. "When I grant you the grace of devotion, give thanks to God, not because you are worthy, but because I have had compassion upon you. If you do not feel the warmth of devotion, but have rather the sense of coldness and barrenness, be instant in prayer, cry out and knock at the door; and do not cease until you obtain at least

¹ Isai. lxvi. 1. Acts vii. 49.

² S. Mark xiv. 14, 15.

³ 1 Cor. v. 7.

⁴ Ps. cii. 7.

crumb or a drop of Divine grace. You have need of Me, not I of you. You do not come to sanctify Me, but I to sanctify and bless you. You come that you may be sanctified by me, and united to Me; that you may receive fresh supplies of grace, and may be stirred up anew to amendment of life. Do not neglect this grace, but prepare your heart with all diligence, and so come into the presence of your Beloved.

4. "And remember that it is necessary for you not only to prepare yourself devoutly before Communion, but to be very careful in your behaviour after the reception of the Sacrament; care is no less necessary afterwards, than devout preparation before: indeed circumspection after enjoying the means of grace is the best preparation for receiving more grace. A person shews that he has not in this respect acted for the best, if immediately after communion he dwells too much upon worldly things. Beware of too much talking, remain as much as possible in quiet, be alone with your God; for you possess Him, whom the world cannot take from you. I am He to whom you ought to give yourself without reserve; so that you may live no longer in yourself, but wholly and without distraction in Me."

// CHAP. XIII. *THAT THE DEVOUT SOUL
OUGHT EARNESTLY TO SEEK ENTIRE
UNION WITH CHRIST IN THE HOLY
SACRAMENT.* *Boston Nov 2. 77.*

1. O THAT I might find Thee, Lord, alone, that I might open my whole heart to Thee, and enjoy Thy presence as my soul desires! O that none might see me, nor any creature move me, but Thou alone speak to me and I to Thee, as a man converses with one whom he loves, and a friend with his friend. This I ask, this I desire, that I may be entirely united to Thee, and may be able to withdraw my heart from all created things, and by means of Holy Communion may have my mind more fixed upon

things heavenly and eternal. Ah Lord God, w
I be wholly one with Thee, and entirely delive
self? Thou in me, and I in Thee; and so gran
may remain one for ever.

2. Verily Thou art *my Beloved, the chiefest a
thousand*¹, with whom my soul is well pleased to
the days of her life. Verily Thou art my Peace;
whom is deep peace and true rest, out of whom
and sorrow and infinite misery. *Verily, Thou a
that hidest Thyself*²; and Thy counsel is not
wicked, but Thy speech is with the humble an
*O how sweet, Lord, is Thy Spirit*³, who deignest
us with bread from heaven, that Thou mayest s
love towards Thy children! Truly *there is no
great, that hath God so nigh unto them*⁴, as *Thou
art* to all Thy faithful servants; to whom Thou a
to grant this Holy Sacrament for their great an
comfort.

3. What other people are so blessed as the
Christ? Or what creature under Heaven is so b
God, as the devout soul to which God permits s
approach to Himself? O unspeakable grace! O
ful condescension! O immeasurable love towa
kind! and what shall I render unto the Lord fo
measurable grace and love? There is nothing el
to do, but to give my whole heart to God and se
union with Him. Then will all that is within
for joy, when my soul has become perfectly one
Then He will say to me, "If thou art willing to
I too will be thine." And I will answer: "Be p
Lord, to abide with me; I will gladly be Thine;
my desire, that my heart may be united unto Th

¹ Cant. v. 10.

² Isai. xlv. 15.

³ Wisd. xii. 1.

⁴ Deut. iv. 7.

CHAP. XIV. ON THE ARDENT LONGING OF
SOME DEVOUT SOULS FOR THE HOLY
SACRAMENT.

1. *O how plentiful is Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee*¹! When I think of the devotion and love with which some approach Thy Sacrament, O Lord, I am confounded and blush, because I approach Thy altar and the Table of Thy Holy Communion so lukewarmly or even coldly; because I continue so barren and unmoved; because my heart is not thoroughly inflamed by the sense of Thy presence, O God; neither am I attracted as many devout persons are and have been, whose extreme love has found its vent in tears, whose heart and mouth have called out to Thee the fountain of life, no other food availing to satisfy their hunger save only the spiritual food of Thy most blessed body and blood.

2. O truly burning faith, itself an argument for the reality of Thy presence! For they truly *know their Lord in the breaking of bread*², whose *heart burns within them* as Jesus walks with them by the way. Too often, alas! such love and devotion, such warmth of affection, are far from me. Be merciful unto me, dearest Lord; and grant to Thy poor servant to experience such a sense of Thy love in the Holy Communion, that my faith may be strengthened, that my hope in Thy goodness may be increased, and that my charity once thoroughly inflamed and fed with the heavenly manna may never more fail.

3. Thy mercy is able to grant me the grace which I long for, and to visit me with the spirit of fervour when Thine own good time shall have come. For, though I glow not with such warmth of desire as some of Thy devout worshippers, yet at least (through Thy grace) I earnestly long for it, beseeching Thee to make me one of the number of those who heartily love Thee, and to preserve me in that blessed fellowship evermore.

¹ Ps. xxxi. 21.

² S. Luke xxiv. 32, 35.

CHAP. XV. *THAT THE GRACE OF DEVOTION
IS GAINED BY HUMILITY AND SELF-
DENIAL.*

1. "It is necessary for you to seek the grace of devotion earnestly, to ask for it with strong desire, to wait for it patiently and in faith, to receive it gratefully, to keep it humbly, to use it diligently, leaving to God the time and manner of His visitation from on high. Especially you ought to humble yourself, when you feel within you little devotion or none; and yet not to be too much cast down, nor to be saddened above measure. God often grants in one short moment what He has long withheld; sometimes He gives in the end, what He deferred when it was first asked for.

2. "If grace were always given at once, and could be had whenever prayer was made, it would be more than weak man could bear. Wherefore the grace of devotion is to be waited for with good hope and in humble patience. Nevertheless you must impute it to your own sins, if it be not given, or if it be taken away however imperceptibly. It is sometimes but a small matter, which hinders and takes away grace; (if indeed that can rightly be called *small* and not rather *great*, which hinders so great a blessing;) but if you can only remove and entirely subdue this small or great thing (call it which you will), you will obtain that which you ask.

3. "For as soon as ever you have given yourself up to God with your whole heart, and ceased to wish for this or that merely for your own pleasure, and thrown yourself wholly upon Him, you will find yourself in union and at peace with Him; because nothing will then be so much to your taste as the fulfilment of the Divine will. Whoever therefore has raised up his heart and all its intentions simply to God, and has got free from all inordinate love or dislike of any created thing, will be fit to receive grace and deemed worthy of the gift of devotion. For the

Lord gives his own blessing where he finds vessels prepared for its reception. And the more perfectly any one renounces his infirmities, and dies to himself, so much the more quickly does grace come, so much the more abundantly does it enter, and so much the higher does it raise the heart which has been set at liberty.

4. "Then will a man's eyes be opened, and he will abound in love, and be filled with wonder, and his heart will swell within him, because the hand of the Lord is with him, and he has put himself entirely in the Lord's hand for evermore. Lo thus shall the man be blessed, who seeks God with his whole heart, and does not give his soul to vanity. This is the man, who, in the reception of the Holy Eucharist, will enjoy the mighty grace of union with God, because he looks not to his own devotion and consolation, but above all devotion and consolation to the glory and honour of God."

CHAP. XVI. *THAT WE SHOULD OPEN OUR
NECESSITIES TO CHRIST, AND IMPORE
HIS GRACE.*

1. O MOST dear Lord, whom I desire with all devotion to receive, Thou knowest my infirmity and the necessities which I feel; by what evils and sins I am oppressed; how often I am oppressed, tempted, disturbed, defiled. I come to Thee for a remedy, I beseech Thee to grant me consolation and relief. I speak to Thee who knowest all things, to whom all my inward thoughts are open, and who alone canst thoroughly comfort and assist me. Thou knowest what good things I need, and how poor I am in holiness.

2. Lo, I stand before Thee poor and naked, asking for grace, and imploring pity. Refresh Thy hungry suppliant, inflame my coldness with the fire of Thy love, enlighten my blindness with the brightness of Thy presence. Turn for me all earthly things to bitterness, all painful and grievous things into lessons of patience, all

created things into contempt and oblivion. Lift up my heart to Thyself in Heaven, and suffer me not to wander as a vagabond upon earth. Thou alone shalt be sweet to me from this time forth for evermore, because thou alone art my Meat and my Drink, my Love and my Joy, my Delight and all my Happiness.

3. O that Thou wouldest wholly inflame me with the sense of Thy presence, set my heart on fire, and change me into Thyself; so that I may become one spirit with Thee, by the grace of inward union, and the fusion of burning love! Suffer me not to go away from Thee hungry and barren; but work with me in mercy, as Thou hast often wonderfully worked with Thy saints. What marvel if I be wholly inflamed by Thee, and cease to be anything in myself, seeing that Thou art a Fire ever burning and never failing, a Love purifying the heart and enlightening the mind?

CHAP. XVII. *ON ARDENT LOVE TOWARDS
CHRIST, AND VEHEMENT DESIRE OF
RECEIVING HIM.*

1. WITH the deepest devotion and with ardent love, with all the affection and fervour of my heart, I desire to receive Thee, O Lord, as many saints and devout persons have desired to receive Thee in Holy Communion, even they who have been most pleasing to Thee in holiness of life, and in ardour of devotion. O my God, Love eternal, my sole Good, endless Felicity, I desire with the most earnest longing and with the deepest reverence, which ever any Saint felt or could feel, to receive Thee.

2. And though I be unworthy to experience all those devout feelings, I yet offer to Thee all the affection of my heart, as if I alone possessed the true warmth of love. Yea, whatever a pious mind can conceive and desire, all this I offer and present to Thee with the deepest veneration and the most inward fervour. I desire to keep nothing for myself, but to sacrifice myself and all that I have

freely and most willingly to Thee. O Lord my God, my Creator and Redeemer, I desire to receive Thee in the same spirit of love, faith, hope and purity as was manifested by that blessed one, who in answer to the annunciation of the mystery of Thy Incarnation, replied, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word*¹.

3. And as Thy blessed forerunner, that most preeminent Saint, John the Baptist, rejoiced at Thy presence through the power of the Spirit in his mother's womb; and as afterwards, beholding Thee walking amongst men, he said with genuine humility, *The friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice*²; so I also desire to be inflamed with sacred love, and to present myself to Thee with my whole heart. Therefore with all creatures upon earth, and with Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven, I laud and magnify Thy Holy Name.

4. Receive my vows, O Lord my God, and my efforts to give Thee praise and blessing, which are due to Thee in right of Thine infinite Majesty. I desire to render these every day and every moment; and I invite all the spirits in heaven and all the faithful upon earth to join with me in rendering to Thee the tribute of thanks and praise.

5. Let all people, nations and languages praise Thee, and with highest joy and ardent devotion magnify Thy sweet and holy Name. And whosoever they be who reverently and devoutly celebrate Thy mighty Sacrament and receive it in full faith, may they be accounted worthy to receive at Thy hands grace and mercy, and may they pray for me a sinner; and having been comforted and refreshed from Thy holy Table during this life, may we all meet at Thy Table in Heaven and enjoy the fulness of Thy blessed presence for evermore. Amen.

¹ S. Luke i. 38.

² S. John iii. 29.

CHAP. XVIII. *THAT MEN MUST NOT BE TOO CURIOUS IN THEIR QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE MYSTERY OF THE SACRAMENT, BUT HUMBLE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.*

1. "YOU must beware of curious and unprofitable speculation concerning this Sacrament, if you would avoid being left in the depths of doubt. God can do more than man can understand. The right course is that of humble inquiry concerning the truth, readiness to be taught, with reverent consideration of the conclusions of those who have walked closely with God.

2. "Blessed is the simplicity of mind, which leaves difficult questions, and walks in the plain firm path of God's commandments. (Many have lost the spirit of devotion, while they have endeavoured to penetrate the depths.) What God requires is not acuteness of intellect or comprehension of mysteries, but simple faith and a pure life. If you do not understand the things which are beneath you, how can you understand those which are above? Submit yourself to God, look to Him with humble faith, and the light of knowledge shall be granted to you, as far as it is useful or necessary.

3. "Some men are sorely tried in matters of faith; but it is not themselves but an enemy, who hath done this. Do not grieve, do not vex yourself concerning your thoughts, neither make answer to the doubts which Satan puts into your mind; rather believe the words of God, believe what He has spoken by His Saints and Prophets, and the enemy will flee from you. It often tends much to the benefit of God's servants to have suffered such things. For Satan does not tempt and trouble infidels and sinners, whom he possesses safely; it is rather the faithful and devout whom in divers manners he tempts and vexes.

4. "Go on therefore in simple and undoubting faith, and come to the Sacrament with suppliant reverence. And

whatsoever you cannot understand, commit without fear to the Omnipotent God. God will not deceive you; he only is liable to be deceived, who trusts too much in himself. God walks with the simple, He reveals Himself to the humble, He gives understanding to babes, He causes light to shine upon the pure in heart, and He hides His grace from the curious and the proud. Human reason is weak, and may be deceived; but true faith cannot be deceived.

5. "All reason and intellectual examination ought to follow faith, not to take the lead of it, nor to interfere with it. For faith and love flourish together, and work secretly and most effectually in this most holy and most excellent Sacrament. God, the eternal and incomprehensible, infinite in power, does great things in heaven and earth, neither is there any searching out of His marvellous works. If the works of God were such as to be easily comprehended by human reason, they could not be described as marvellous and unspeakable."

THE END.

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